

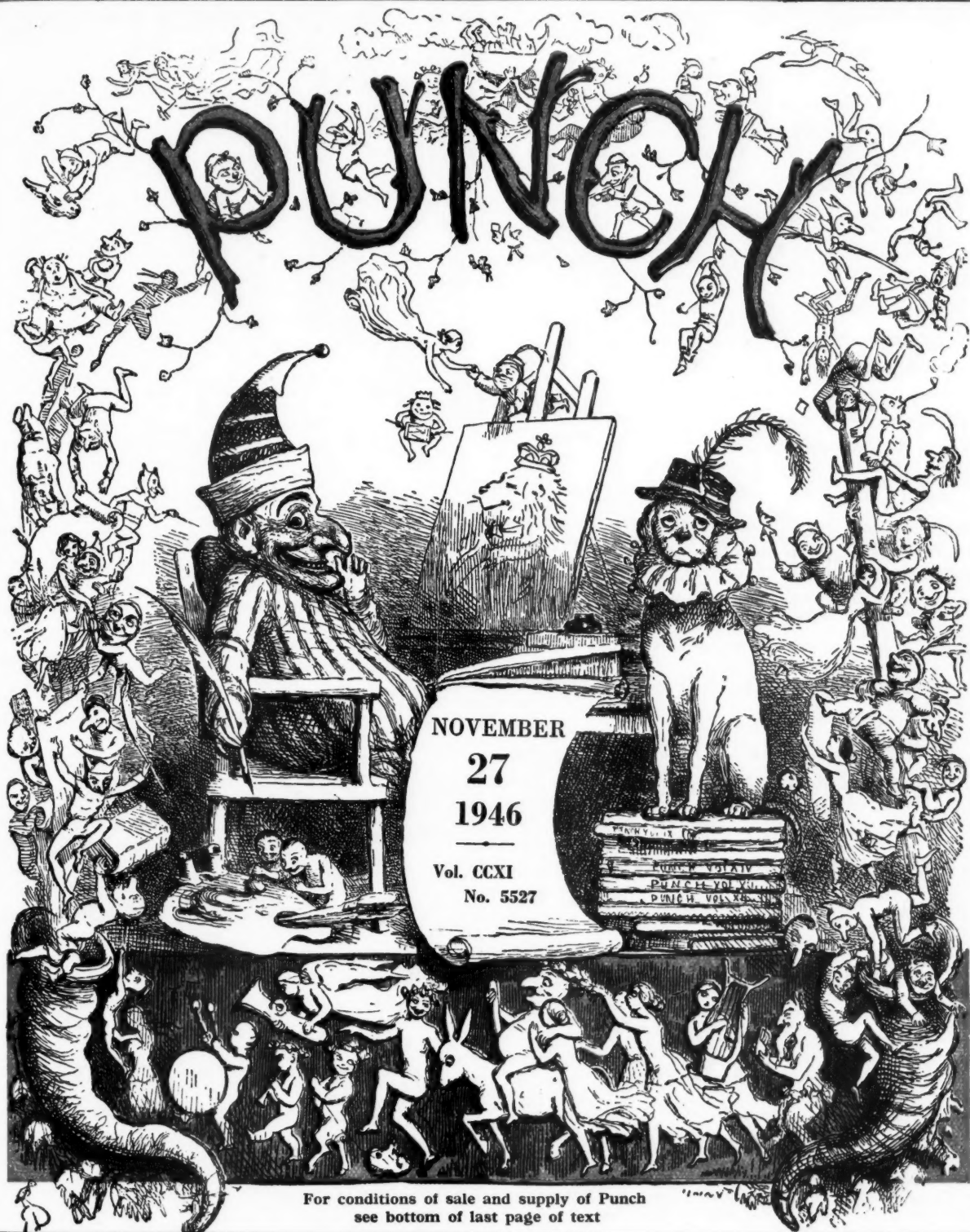
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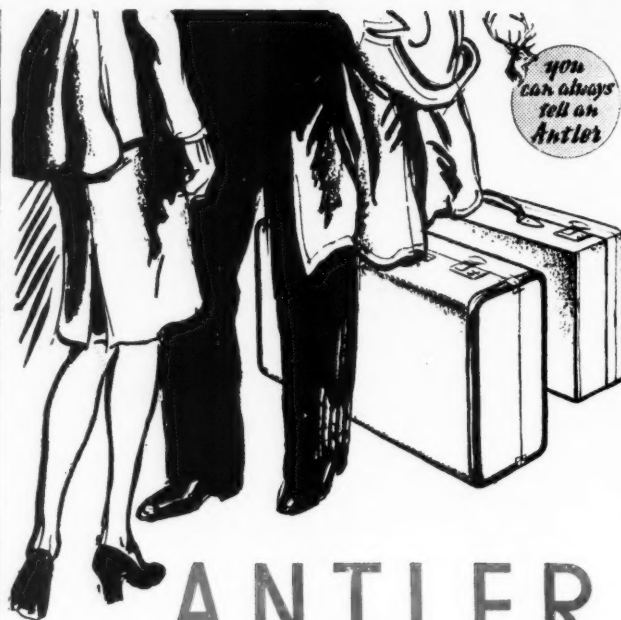
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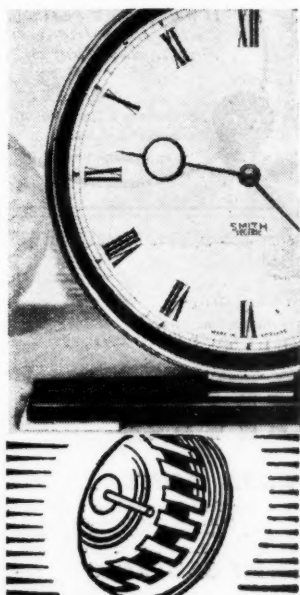
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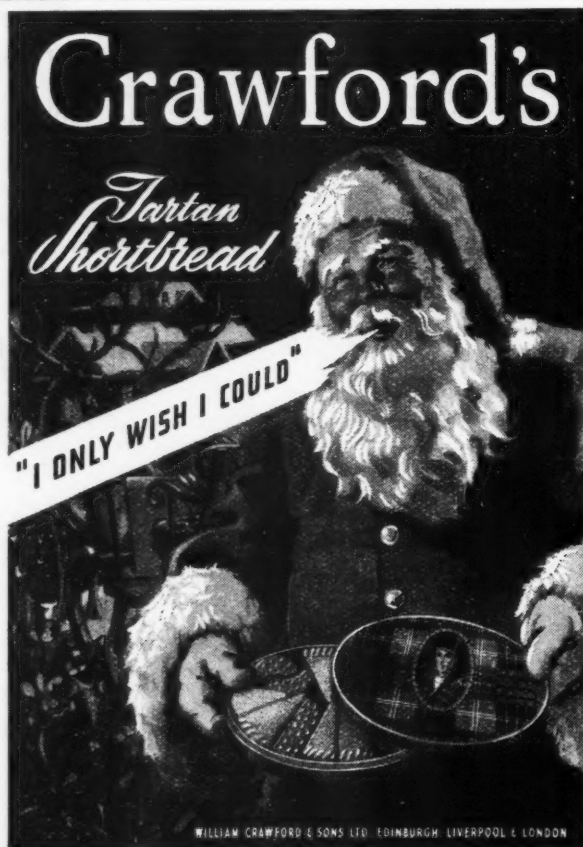
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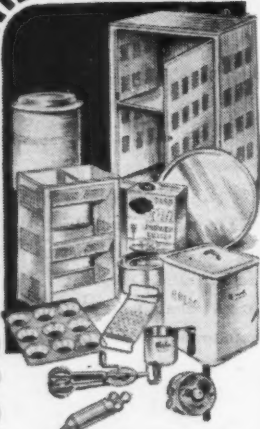
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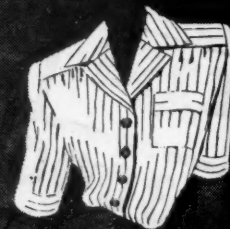
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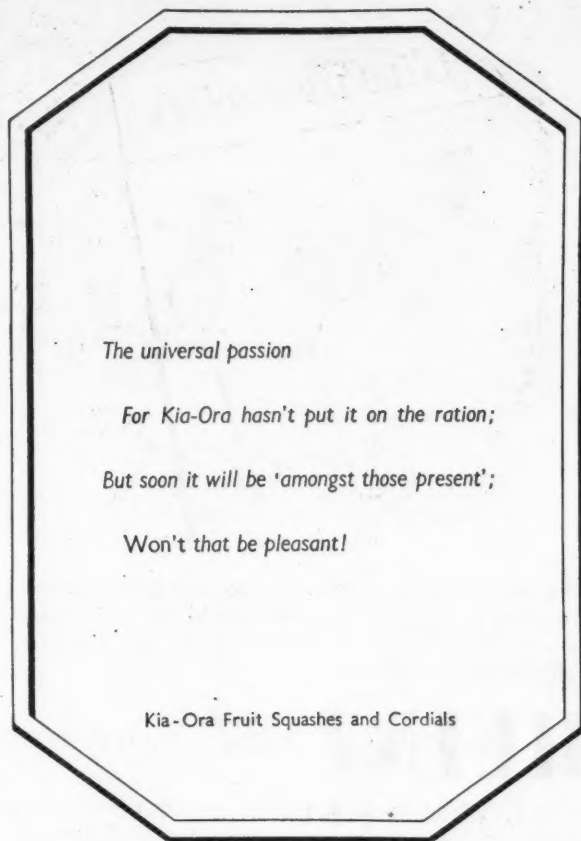


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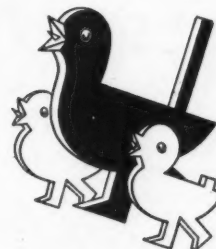
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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXI No. 5527

November 27 1946

Charivaria

In an American film of London life all the street scenes are shrouded in thick fog. So realistic is the atmosphere that cinema patrons cough just as if they were in a theatre.

It is claimed that some bridge-players cheat by a system of sniffing. This is known as a code in the nose.



"MATTHEWS TO STOKE"
"Daily Mail."
Chilly on deck?

A postal chess tournament between players in this country and Australia has lasted for two years and is only half finished. It is indicative of the handicaps our sportsmen are labouring under that the British team is having to resume without lemons.

"Gun, 12-bore hammerless ejector by Jeffrey; perfect condition; in case; £75."—*Advt. in local paper.*
You never know, do you?

Building is being held up in some areas because no pipes are obtainable, according to a contractor. Why cannot the men make do with no cigarettes like the rest of us?

"Norman main line rail services were resumed this afternoon."

Evening paper.

The "Senlac Arrow" will leave platform 1 at 10.66.

"The man who is always behind cannot expect to keep his job," says an efficiency expert. Railway guards are said to scorn this view.

A revolt in Mexico was crushed in seven hours. Much more of this and Mexico will be relegated to the third division.



We read of a wine merchant's assistant who was dismissed for sampling the stock. Ominously enough he was discovered under the counter.

"The Government was fully conscious of the seriousness of the recruiting position, which could only be described as serious."

Report in "Dundee Courier."

Then why not describe it as such?

A self-made man writes that success in business isn't everything. Little more, in fact, than a good deal.

Stores are said to be making a speciality of toys for children of fathers who are too corpulent to do much kneeling.

"In these worrying times plenty of play and plenty of sleep is necessary for everybody," declares a medical writer. Dramatic critics of course can take the two together.

"Business men have no time to bother about the niceties of grammar," says a writer. If anything, they prefer a proposition to end up with.

We understand that a young man charged with stealing wireless parts pleaded that he had got into the hands of a receiving set.

Don't Brush that Bowler, Men!

"Vivacious colours, high crowns, and large unswept brims are to be features of this winter's hats."—*"The Bulletin."*

"I always try to put myself in the other person's place," remarks a clergyman. He doesn't say whether he carries this principle as far as the fish queue.

Merely a Supposition

"MY point is," I told him, "that you can't give any coherent story of a thing that didn't occur."

"I don't know," said the policeman. "How about losing a rhinoceros? And how about murder?"

We were really talking about a ring. The ring had been left in a shop to have a stone put in it. The owner of the ring had inquired about it five or six times. At last she was told that it had been given back to her.

Nothing had been written down on paper at all. Her trouble was merely that she hadn't got the ring. If she had she would have been wearing it. That was simply that.

"Well, how about a murder?" I said. "How do you prove you *didn't* commit a murder last Tuesday week?"

"No corpse found anywhere. Nobody reported missing."

"Well, suppose somebody was?"

"Nothing to connect me with the affair."

"Wait a minute," I said, "let us suppose I am Julius Caesar."

He seemed nonplussed.

"Let us imagine for a moment," I went on, "that I hadn't been murdered in the Forum, but merely couldn't be found. Let us say that you are Brutus. How do you propose to show that you didn't murder me on the Ides of March. Forty-four B.C., wasn't it?"

"Very likely."

"Likely, indeed! That shows the state of the police records. Let us say that the lictors have been called in. Let us suppose that Mark Antony has a long story about hiding behind a pillar in the Forum and seeing you talk angrily to me for several minutes, and pull out a dagger in a threatening sort of way. I was carrying a bag of drachmas at the time. Since then I haven't been seen."

"We should dig up the Forum."

"That would take a long time."

"We should call at your house."

"It's a wonderful place," I said. "On the Palatine. You might have a look at the atrium. The wife of Caesar, who, you remember, is quite above suspicion, says I've been so busy writing a book about Gaul that she hasn't seen me for a fortnight. Where are you now?"

"She might have missed the drachmas."

"I doubt it. One drachma is very like another. At least I think it is. I haven't seen many. My point is simply this. When the Roman police say to Brutus 'At or about half-past ten A.M. on the Ides of March, as you were proceeding in the course of your duties towards the Forum, can you distinctly remember not murdering Julius Caesar?' All you can say is 'Yes.' 'Very well,' they go on. 'At or about half-past twelve P.M. on the same day can you distinctly remember a precisely similar incident?' You just say 'Yes' again. And then they say 'At or about half-past three have you the same recollection of the same event?' You see how your case is weakening. Is it possible that a normal man proceeding so often all around the Forum can remember omitting to murder a fellow like Julius Caesar so many times on a single day? It hardly seems natural. There is no corroborating detail about it. Whereas on the other side the story keeps growing more vivid from hour to hour."

"There could be an alibi," said the policeman.

"That's just what there couldn't. All you can remember most likely about the Ides of March is some long hard tramps through the Forum with a glance every now and then at Pompey's statue, a conversation with Metellus Cimper, a refusal to dine with Cicero, a walk along the

banks of the Tiber, and the purchase of a few hundred slaves. On the whole I think your best course would have been to get into a hot bath and cut your veins. It's a good plot, and I wonder Shakespeare didn't use it."

"I don't see," said the policeman, "exactly what all this has got to do with your ring."

"It's not precisely on all fours, I agree. I'll put a rather simpler case to you. Suppose I ask you to lend me a fiver?"

"I shan't."

"You needn't. But suppose, whenever we meet, you keep asking me for this fiver, and at last I say I gave it you back on the Nones of November, whatever day that may be. You simply say I didn't. Very well. I can give you a long yarn about meeting you on the Nones outside the Rose and Crown. It was a wet and windy day. The tang of late autumn was in the air. I can state the precise spot at which I crossed the road, eagerly holding out the money, the words I used, your gratitude at the unexpected occurrence, and the way you buttoned the money into your pocket. Since I did happen to see you there at precisely the time and on the day I name, you have no defence whatever. You simply say 'It didn't happen,' and who is going to believe a yarn like that in the face of all the evidence in my narrative?"

"Still," he said, "I haven't lent you a fiver, have I?"

"No, but if you had, it would be the duty of any decent soothsayer to tell you 'Beware the Nones of November!' wouldn't it?"

He said that I was taking him outside the scope of his present inquiry.

"There's really no evidence," he repeated, "for the police in your side of the affair."

"And the more evidence there is on the other, the more it shows that they are wrong."

He said I could always try a civil case if I wanted to.

"I shall freely admit if I do," I said, as I showed him out, "that it would have been utterly different if the thing had been a rhinoceros."

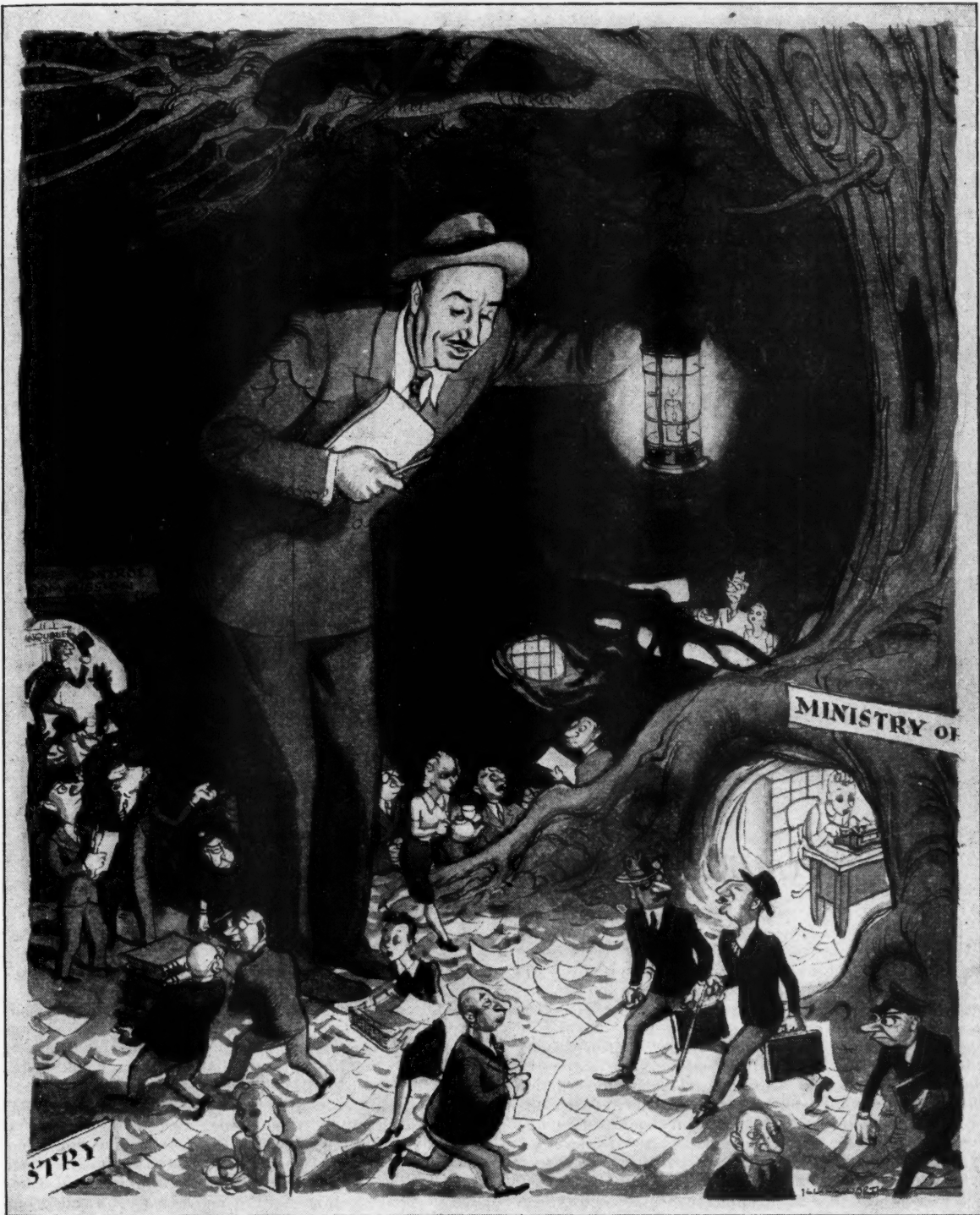
"And you can always tell the court," he replied, "that story of yours about Julius Caesar and the five-pound note."

What the police force need is psychology. EVOR.

On Revisiting the Ranks of the Why

FIVE years have passed; five summers, with the length Of five long winters! and again I wear These sock-suspenders with the futile springs That make me inly murmur. Once again I wrestle with these cuff-links that refuse The proffered slit, and feel along the heart No tranquil restoration. Wreaths of smoke Mount up in silence from between my lips In hours of weariness, while here I stand In somewhat of a sad perplexity At all this unintelligible world, In which the burden of the mystery Is why affections gently lead us on Through that best portion of a good man's time To little, nameless, hundred-numbered acts With buttons and with studs.

J. B. N.



SNOW WHITEHALL AND THE MILLION BUREAUCRATS

[Mr. Walt Disney is at present in Ireland to study the habits of leprechauns.]



"... and if I'm caught I would like to retain your services."

On Reading Fourteen Newspapers while Listening to the Wireless

SITTING here in front of the fire, what have I, a member of the greatest commonwealth of nations the world has ever known, knit together by ties of free association which no power on earth except the iniquitous Bretton Woods agreement can break asunder—what have I to complain of—whom envy?—as I survey continent after continent rent by internal dissension, distracted by industrial disputes and whirling giddily to destruction up the steep spiral staircase of inflation? With my belly full of the husks which, but for the Extraction of Wheat Order, 1945, would have been eaten by swine, I can afford to dismiss the reflection that it is high time such an anachronistic instrument of tyranny as the British Empire crumbled to dust before the hammer-blows of a democratic socialist foreign policy.

Only yesterday a hundred and eighty-six crans of herrings, worth eleven lakhs of rupees, were thrown back into the sea at Bollipore, Madras, by Muslim fishermen as a protest against the employment of female Hindus on

net-mending duties. Such are the fruits of the policy of meddle and muddle followed so faithfully by a succession of incompetent Conservative governments.

And here is Francis Gooch, at the organ of the Panorama, Morecambe Bay, to entertain me with selections from *Mooning Along in the Sunshine*, arranged by Gus Spenlow.

Rumours that Jimmy Foster, Midlothian's crack custodian, had been bought for a record fee by Charlton were scouted in authoritative football circles this morning. "Jimmy is definitely not for sale," rasped the Wanderers' popular manager, who claims to have bought him from Newcastle United as recently as last Tuesday evening. But it is difficult to reconcile this with Jimmy's own statement: "You can take it from me I shall be turning out with Portsmouth on Saturday as usual." Mr. Walt Disney, who is snapped on page 4 looking out of a port-hole on the *Queen Elizabeth*, told members of the Football Association who met him on the quay at Southampton that he had definitely not come over to scout for inside forwards.

"But I am offering a big prize for leprechauns," he added, amid some laughter from the Opposition benches.

The talk on Cheap Money by a Midland Banker has had to be postponed for some reason. Instead here is Richard Hatte to sing "Asleep in the Deep." More cricket news will be found on page seven.

Day by day the liberty which since the signing of Magna Carta has been the Englishman's most precious heritage fades further and further into the realm of "shadows not substantial things." Day by day Freedom, withdrawing her reluctant foot from the soil of this "blessed plot" which for centuries has been her established home, takes yet one more irrefragable step towards that height whereon "of old" she "sate." The die is cast. The shop is closed. Even the cherished right of every free-born citizen to post his letters when and where he wills is threatened by the Restriction of Posting Order now under active consideration, as Mr. Morrison admitted yesterday, by the Cabinet. Henceforward it is to be an offence, unless this monstrous piece of petty tyranny is to be challenged and challenged at once by the united voice of the nation, to post a letter or card (with the single exception of mail addressed to Cyprus and the Near East—a palpable electioneering dodge which will deceive nobody) outside a radius of two miles from the dwelling-house or office in which the letter was written.

Richard Hatte appears, by the way, by permission of Holman Hunt Theatres, Ltd., Ipswich.

"Bishops had better mind their own business, or they will soon find themselves taken over hood, snood and gaiters." This clear-cut warning to the episcopate to keep their hands off the trade unions was given by a Communist speaker on a motion before the House of Commons which sought "humbly to pray that a crack might with advantage have been taken at the clergy" in the course of His Majesty's Speech on the occasion of the opening of Parliament. On being challenged the speaker admitted that he was not a Member of the House and should by rights have been addressing a rally at the Albert Hall. Both he and the motion were then by leave withdrawn.

You get full Marx for that answer, Chris.

And now here is a trenchant article in a leading organ of public opinion which goes slip-slop, wish-wash, slip-slop, wish-wash, and so on *ad nauseam*.

Thank you, Lionel Hale. I am afraid the Atlantic came in a bit there.

H. F. E.

Cherchez la Femme!

"An experienced Female Tracer, capable of dealing with any class work."—"Wanted" Advt. in "The Times."



"It's all right, Mummy, we're only using flour."

Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XXXIII

"ONE of the saddest results of the decline in the Victorian custom of very large families," Amos observed, "is that nowadays one could not, without some little anxious explanation of the circumstances, begin a story or reminiscence with the words 'Recently, as I dangled two of my uncles on my knee . . .'"

* * * * *

"A recent film," said Amos—"it may have been *At Dawn by Night*, or *In Which I Die*, or *We Dive at Destiny*, or *Each Dawn We Serve*, or *They Drive Me Nuts*—one of those, unless it was a Food Flash—made me think seriously, I forget why, about my chief failing as a novelist." After a momentary pause he went on "Well, when I say failing—"

"Ha!" someone interjected softly.

Amos frowned at him and said in a very dignified manner "I correct the word simply because it does not express exactly what I mean. I should be the . . . well," he checked himself again, determined to be fair, "among the last to deny that I have failings as a novelist; simply, the characteristic to which I refer could not precisely be described as one. It's—it's a disinclination to use material that will be recognized. This cramps my style extremely. It often prevents me from even starting."

"Do you mean," a member of the company began, "that—"

"Oh," Amos broke in immediately, recognizing a danger that the talk might become general, "I don't mean the doubt that assails almost any fiction-writer, the thought that some woman may recognize an incident involving herself and laugh derisively at the way one has rearranged what actually happened. Nor do I refer particularly to the people who might think they recognize themselves and resent it. What puts me out is the mere principle of recognition, the very fact that an acquaintance will be able to say, if one mentions a red-painted gate-post or a turn in a road, 'Ah!'" (Amos assumed a cretinously knowing expression and a squeaky voice) "'Ah! that will be the gate-post next door to his house' or 'Ah! that's the turn in Stupid Street on the way to the cemetery.' I loathe the thought of giving people such a . . . handle."

"But readers will always," someone objected—"always discover circumstances or characters they think they recognize, even if there's no justification at all."

"Precisely," Amos agreed. "Could I have a better excuse for not writing *anything*?"

* * * * *

In one of his rare recollections of extreme youth he announced that he had been a singularly unlucky child. "I agree," he said, looking round with an air of spiking everybody's guns, "that my appearance alone would have prevented my ever being chosen to present a bouquet to the Queen; but if I had been, it would certainly have turned out that she didn't want it."

* * * * *

His distaste for any kind of public or even mildly formal function is—as I have no doubt implied—extreme. Not long ago we asked whether it was true that at some City banquet he had stood up and read a letter from himself regretting his ability to attend; and he said it was. "Then I went home," he said, "as they weren't dishing out any more brandy."

Amos said it was absurd to say that reviewers had no influence on literature. "I detect signs," he said, "that more and more books are being produced with an eye on our capricious friend here," and he tapped the publication open on his knee. "Authors and publishers manage to arrange it between them with almost mathematical nicety—something in the blurb, first, to sting one of his hobby-horses a trifle, and then, in case that fails to act, a succession of obvious, easily-appreciated cracks or short detachable passages of just-not-too-hackneyed 'fine writing' in nice eye-catching positions halfway down every right-hand page about a third of the way through the book, so that something he can quote with approval is sure to be in the fragment of the book he looks at. It can't miss. I often wonder why the bits he doesn't quote aren't used again next publishing season."

* * * * *

"As far as I can judge from reports of the home life of people who have been successful in football pools," said Amos, "it seems to me that the first remark of anybody who has just won a thousand pounds is likely to be the delighted announcement that now he will be able to send in two hundred and forty thousand tries next week."

* * * * *

I cannot recall what he was talking about when he threw in the memorable parenthesis ". . . in the Army, where sergeants slope the acidulous hips . . ."

* * * * *

Amos is more soft-hearted than you might think, but it was not perhaps precisely soft-heartedness that made him say recently "The man who has all my sympathy at the moment, you know, is the unhappy Mr. G. I. Bride."

R. M.

Coastal Autumn

NOW autumn sea holds holiday at last;
Bluff rollers rise to slap the esplanade,
And gleaming foam on empty concrete cast
Streams back, rejoicing, in a gay cascade.

A lonely freedom riots round the shore;
The chairs are stacked, the huts all hollow-faced.
The beach photographer patrols no more,
And heavy vans absorb green bins of waste.

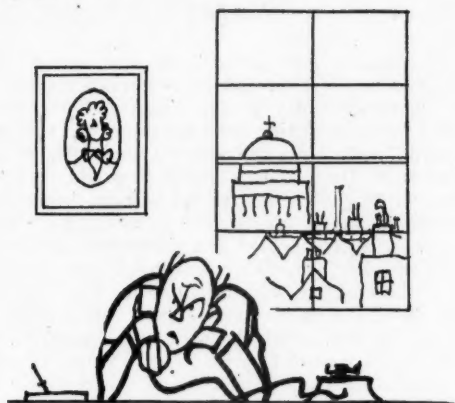
But now the breakers, loosed from leaping throngs
That rode the surf green-goggled in the glare,
Throw back their heads, shout rude untrammelled songs
And fling white caps into the wind-washed air.

The grey-backed gulls go bobbing on the swell
Among the shoals agreeably enlarged,
Or stand like statues on some closed hotel,
The only visitors not overcharged.

A season passes, and the year is old;
Yet waves make merry, as the rout retires.
Their crests are silver, though the woods are gold,
A blithe tide skipping, while folk light their fires.

G. D. M.

Ingalls



"Now over in the States, so they tell me, you merely lift the receiver, and you get straight through at once, even if it's right the other end of the country."

Peanuts and Peaches

THIS bit of Oxford Street has come down shocking," said the cornet-player sadly. "I'm fair sick of it."

"You mean the bomb damage?" I murmured.

"No, the hawkers. You can't give your best round here. Every time I do a top note a chestnut barrer catches me in the back." He lurched suddenly off the kerb and turned to scowl at a passing barrow. "That barrer was selling peaches not so long ago. You'd never believe the trouble I got into through peaches!"

Then I remembered where I had seen him before. It was on the day I ate a peach while strolling along Oxford Street. Good society, I believe, recognizes that such a thing is nowadays as unavoidable as the barrows, but it lays down no rule for disposing of the stones. Even to-day I like to maintain a certain dignity, and I feel that one simply cannot in daylight fling peach-stones about regardless in Oxford Street. Yet few things are so searing to a sensitive soul as creeping about guiltily with a damp peach-stone concealed in one's palm.

In desperation I had sidled into a saloon bar, thinking to deposit the stone surreptitiously under a seat. It seemed the only way. An astonishing sight met my eyes. A big, angry publican was leaning across the bar counter, glaring at his customers, who sat rigidly huddled near the door. They were well-dressed—typical men-about-town, but their faces were grey and drawn with suspense, like those of trapped animals. The publican still watched them as he served me. The silence was uncanny. I joined them nervously.

"I can see through you all right," observed the publican.

"Psychic?" I asked affably.

"Peach-stones!" he hissed.

I blenched and stiffened in every limb, and a sort of shudder ran round the bar.

"I won't have it!" he went on. "I know 'em as soon as they come in, by their hands."

I glanced around me; every man's left hand, like my own, was clenched. There was another nerve-racking silence. You could have heard a pin drop. In fact there was a faint, mushy plop.

"Who dropped that stone?" cried the publican in an awful voice.

A young man, wearing the tie of a very good school, blushed scarlet. After a long pause he stooped and retrieved the stone.

"They all come in here, flicking peach-stones about," went on the publican. "Why don't they leave 'em in the fun-fairs? The back streets are full of 'em. This is a respectable pub."

There was another agonizing silence. We were all near breaking point. None of us could face Oxford Street again with our peach-stones. We had suffered enough out there. Only the hypnotic glare of the publican's eyes checked us from jettisoning our stones and rushing away. Then a cornet began wailing outside.

"We're closing in five minutes," announced the publican.

The tension became unbearable. Someone caught his breath in a sort of sob as the cornet-player entered. He held out a small velvet collecting bag. The relief was overwhelming. We relaxed and stretched our limbs and smiled. As the player passed among us we nodded kindly at him, dropped our stones into his little bag, and quietly left the premises. At the door I glanced back. The cornet-player was greeting the apoplectic publican.

"I must come in here more often," he was saying. "Very generous lot, I must say. I'll have a pint."

As I left he turned up the little bag and emptied its contents on the counter.

o o

Getting on by Getting Up.

(An authority in the furniture-making trade points out that in Scotland beds are generally made six inches shorter than in England.)

IN Scotland—hard-working, as everyone knows—

It's perfectly sure to be said

That this variation in measurement shows

That the English lie longer in bed.

W. K. H.

o o

"The ideology for which he stood was as dead as the dado. He was trying to pull off a strategy in electioneering that was common in the nineteenth century."—*S. Wales paper.*

Now as outmoded as the fancy wainscot.



"Now over in Britain, so they tell me, you merely lift the receiver, and you get straight through at once, even if it's right the other end of the country."



"I'd like to contact the designer of the *Adastra* garden rake."

Mrs. Smith Takes Her Driving Test.

(Driving Tests began again on November 1st.)

SHEE at the guiding Wheels
 Uneasie sate, whom hee with judgment dire
 Assess'd, each severall Motion good or ill
 In equall Balance weigh'd. Anon she drove
 Not like that King by bold *Elisha* crown'd,
 The son of *Nimshi*, whom the watchman saw
 From *Jezebel's* Tower in furious Chariot ride,
 The scourge of *Joram*; shee with tardier pace
 Steer'd onward, though uncertain, where the Streets
 Replete with forms as thick as Autumn leaves
 In *Vallombrosa* through the noisome Town
 Describ'd their course perplex'd. With anxious eye
 Shee us'd what art mechanick had devis'd
 To win her destin'd Way, or quite arrest
 Where at the candid Lines the Globe uprear'd
 By stern *Belisha* rais'd its warning Sign,
 Or where the verdant Lampe to crimson chang'd
 Inexorable. Soe hee, that Feat perform'd,
 Gave brief Command, which hest obeying, shee
 Mov'd to some Place remote, and at his Word
 Both forward and regressive steer'd her Course
 With Convolutions strange. Thereon they stay'd,
 And she, with sudden Respite made attent,
 What next with Guile he might interrogate
 Of fixed Law in *Whitehall's* courts decreed
 Reluctant* answer'd. As in *Erebus*,
 Beyond the *Styx* in *Charon's* boat convey'd,
 The wandering Hoast of lonely Spirits wait
 The urn of *Minos*, so with trembling Heart
 She heard the Doom pronounc'd.

* With a struggle

Notes

I WAS going to start this article with a piece about kitchen-airers, but the title has reminded me of a small but significant point in connection with note-writing as opposed to letter-writing—the importance to the process of the word “just.” No one writes a note without saying “I’ll just write them a note”; and it would be a harsh type that wrote a note to a friend without beginning “I just wanted to say”; presumably as an apology for the way a note can be compassed at a glance and hardly seems worth the recipient’s trouble in getting it past the jags at the top of the envelope and unfolding it. The advantage of a note, from the writer’s point of view, is that if managed skilfully it can end suddenly with the signature, doing away, as on a postcard, with that “Yours sincerely” trouble; and some people, sociologists think, prefer notes to letters for this very reason; a note combining the hasty postcard tempo with the old-world courtesy of a two-penny-halfpenny stamp to everyone’s satisfaction.

Now for kitchen-airers. The first point I want to make is a philological one—the fact that the word “area” is also associated with kitchens and often gets subconsciously in the way of people trying to say “airer,” so that they have to stop and reassure themselves they are not pronouncing it wrong. (If my readers do not know that the area is the bit in front of a basement, often formerly led down to by a now non-existent flight of steps, and occasionally opened on to by an extra front door when we cannot get an answer from the real front door up above—if my readers don’t know this, then they must be pretty modern.) To go back to the airer, that simple but complicated affair of wooden bars, ropes and toy wheels, all I wanted to mention was the remarkable control exercised by the rope-puller over all sorts of mechanical forces, resulting in a nice feeling of accomplishment when the airer is up again and parallel with the ceiling. How many readers, by the way, know that the coat-hook thing you wind the rope round is called a cleat? And what use, apart from being able to mention it casually to someone who has no idea what they are talking about, have they found this knowledge? Taking a short mental step, we come to hot-water bottles. Much has been written of the agreeable qualities of the hot-water bottle, but I don’t know that anything has been said about that helpful tab at the bottom with the hole to hang it up by, or about the way hot-water bottles have their names written across their middles; warm, cheery names which they seem to have thought of for themselves and which their public takes great pleasure in. Talking of names written across middles, I must mention the queer truth that the normal clock can get through years of its life without anyone noticing what its makers have seen fit to call it, and that to come suddenly upon the name on the face of a stopped clock is to feel sadder than ever, because it makes the clock seem more potentially efficient than ever.

A note on jigsaw puzzles and their doers. The average jigsaw is done by from two to four people, two swotters and two desultory hoverers. Jigsaw-doers nearly always start with the edge, one taking the blue, or sky, the other the brown or rest, and there will be at least one piece of edge deemed to be lost until it is found; when the edges are all joined up the result is a tenuous rectangle which must be steered waveringly into position, with a lot of odd pieces left in the middle because there is not enough room round the edge, and a lot of fussing because whoever takes over the enclosed space to work in will either hang on to the



"Someone's taken your seat, dear."

pieces needed by the person working outside the edge or mess up the edge by pushing the pieces through.

Psychologists are not sure which kind of person votes for doing the sky, but they think it may be defined as either the arrogant kind, the meek kind or the kind that has done the puzzle before and has qualified for a handicap. Whatever the kind, the sky-doer asks for a lot of sympathy but does not always co-operate very well with the casual helper who just picks up a blue piece and bungs it into a likely place, because this is what the sky-doer has been trying all the evening. This applies also to brown pieces, mossy green pieces and indeed any pieces picked up by casual helpers. No decent jigsaw-doer will look at the picture on the box, or even at the picture on the puzzle until it is finished. I mean, there is a general feeling that heads and bodies go together if the shapes of the pieces indicate it, that horses join to stage-coaches, and bits of tile combined with sky mean roofs, but no one is more surprised than the doers when they stand back to look at the finished puzzle and see it as a picture. There is also a kind of picture which people can stand back and see as a potential jigsaw puzzle, which reminds me that we really know very little about the people who paint the pictures destined to be cut up into such little pieces, beyond being grateful to the two halves of their signatures as a point to start from. I nearly forgot to mention the people who get so stuck doing the sky that they are reduced to turning over the pieces and going by the grain of the wood at the back. All I need say about these people is what they themselves know—that jigsaw-manufacturers are up to their tricks and use an almost grainless wood or, to be even safer, cardboard. This, and the delight they take in cutting every piece in a puzzle into the same foolish shape (for example, a Scottish terrier in profile) has long identified them to their public as flint-hearted old meanies. And I should remind readers that the last piece of a jigsaw-puzzle, that is to say the piece that really is missing, is still found oftener on the

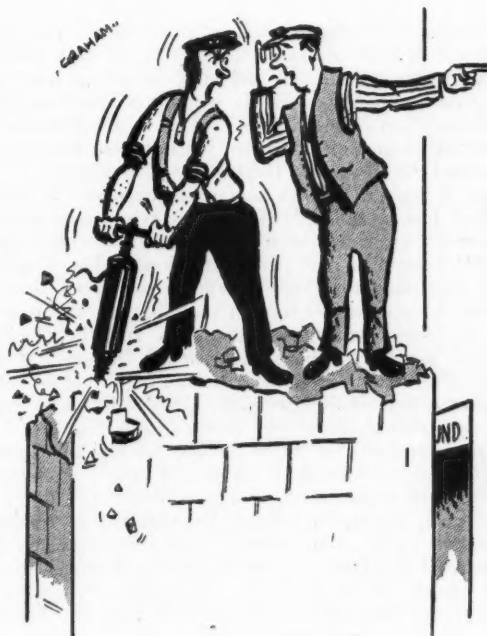
carpet than stuck in the box, in spite of the fact, that missing pieces are so well known to make for the carpet that the carpet will have been searched several times already.

My readers might like in conclusion a short note on boxes, their appearance and peculiarities. The standard box is made of brown cardboard with the corners kept in place by bits of bent wire; not that the average person analyses a box so closely or thinks of it as anything but a spontaneous occurrence; it is only the people who try to shorten a box, or cut it down to make it lower, who realize that it must originally have been a flat piece of cardboard and that whoever got it into shape was better equipped than the layman. There is, or rather was, also a type of box with a shallow lid, a shiny green finish and a white inside, and as definite a personality as the old-time cardboard Easter-egg with its lace paper round the join and its coating of wallpaper; and there is at the other end of the scale the carton, a blend of box and parcel, demanding from those who do up its ends after use a mild skill indistinguishable from patience. Some boxes and cartons, like some tins, wear the medals won by their contents in world exhibitions, competitions, trade fairs and so on. The public loves these medals; it has to take them on trust because they all seem to have been won before it was born, or at any rate conscious of such goings-on; but it does so willingly, even sharing in the manufacturer's pride to a ridiculous but highly characteristic degree.

o o

"It is sad, the coal situation being what it is, to see moorland faces that kept fires ablaze the year round often crumbling into the ditches."—*Scottish paper.*

The face situation being what it is, too . . .



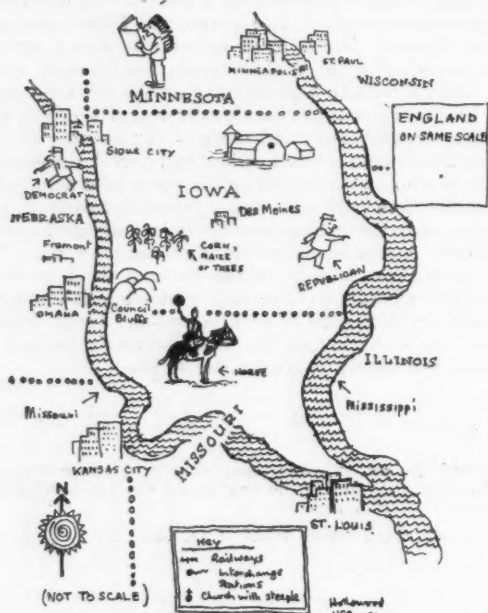
"All right, all RIGHT—I'm not deaf!"

An Innocent at Large

[Mr. Punch's special representative is spending a few months in America to find out what is really happening over there.]

VIII—Omaha, Nebraska

FROM Minneapolis to Omaha is a mere cockstride of four hundred and twelve miles, a journey so short by my new standards that the ritual of the sleeping-car seemed hardly worth while. Mind you, I am still a novice at this business. I thought I had learned all there is to



know about double-decker sleepers from the old Keystone comedies, but there are some things you can only pick up from actual experience. I picked them all up over and over again. Some day, when the wounds of time and place have healed, I shall describe everything in great detail: for the moment let me repeat that the journey from Minneapolis to Omaha is hardly worth the trouble of undressing.

When I arrived Omaha was quite excited. A cargo-boat had just completed the trip up-river from Kansas City, and the event had been hailed as a great step forward in what Americans call transportation. This surprised me. I had imagined (and I seem to remember that an examiner once imagined it with me) the mighty Missouri to be navigable right up to Bismarck and the Rockies. But there it was, the boat had reached Omaha and was unloading its mixed cargo while enthusiastic voices spoke of regular tramp services from St. Louis right up to Sioux City. (See map and add five marks in question 3.)

Omaha reminded me more forcibly of Sinclair Lewis's Zenith than any town I have yet seen. I suppose Omahans will regard that as a compliment. I hope so. Like Zenith, Omaha is solidly Republican, aggressively Republican. Few people have a good word either for Mr. Truman or his predecessor at the White House. A chief grouse against F.D.R. is that he shifted the date of Thanksgiving Day, and I was told that poor Mr. Truman is not even a good comedian.

I volunteered to talk to a convention of university officials at Fremont and a charming Babbitt drove me the

thirty-odd miles in his new car. He was showing off just a little as he streaked along into the setting sun at seventy and eighty miles an hour with only one gloved fingernail in contact with the steering wheel. He and his colleagues (we sat three to a row quite comfortably) answered my questions like so many Joseph Stalins.

Why are you Republican?

Because we've always been Republican.

Is there a Negro problem in Nebraska?

No.

Why not?

Because Nebraska joined the Union after the Civil War and therefore has no fixed views one way or the other. We keep to ourselves: they keep to themselves.

What is this stuff growing here?

Maize, or, as you English don't call it, corn.

Do you think there'll be war with Russia?

This is covered by our answer to Question 7.

Perhaps I was wrong to talk at all, for the Nebraskan twilight was really bewitching. Handsome white-timbered houses sped by. There were no fences or hedges, just patches of lawn and aimless elms and cottonwoods. A car stood at every door. The atmosphere was perfectly clear and the yellow-brown corn stretched away across the plain.

We passed Boys' Town, the celebrated home founded by Father Flanagan for young delinquents. From the road it looked like the model for a provincial university to replace Redbrick. Boys' Town has been the subject of



Wot—no titles?

a successful film, is run entirely by the boys, who are drawn from all countries, and lives up to the founder's dictum, "There's no such thing as a bad boy."

Fremont is a small town of about 11,000 people, but its main street is not less gay (no, gayer!) than Oxford Street, New Street or Cheapside, and its hotels, judged by the "Pathfinder," are as cheery and as comfortable . . . well, enough

said. Babbitt steered the car into a parking lot about thirty yards from the hotel entrance, but loud protests from his fellow delegates made him reverse and find a spot ten yards nearer. I climbed out of the car feeling dour and long-legged.

The dining-room was decorated very handsomely with banners, pennants and trophies. So were the delegates. I was given a large badge covered in celluloid with my name neatly typewritten beneath the legend:

WELCOME TO FREMONT

Hybrid Seed Corn Center of Nebraska

A wonderful meal (turkey and pumpkin-pie, for example, but no hybrid seed corn) and then the fun began. The president chatted amiably for a time and then everybody took a bow while good-humoured insults were distributed. People with birthdays or weddings recently past or approaching received gifts galore—puzzle parcels consisting of paper and slapstick oddments. The laughter was uproarious. Then there was a Door Pool (I think it was called), a sort of prize draw, and when the Innocent captured the booby there was enough din to drown an Anglo-American goodwill mission.

A near neighbour at the long table had wormed his way into my confidence to tell me that the boys had just finished a busy week and . . . well, if I could keep it fairly light . . .

I did the next best thing and kept it short.

More Babbitt followed. We sneaked upstairs to delegates' bedrooms and cracked all the old jokes about how much water, how many fingers, how many for the road, and so on. From the wicked air of conspiracy you'd have thought the Prohibition Act had never been repealed. It was a delightful piece of play-acting.

In Britain we have May Queens, Miss Blackpool 194-, Miss Non-Ferrous Metals, Miss Rolling-Stock and the rest. In Omaha they have a new royal family and peerage every year. Pages of the local papers are devoted just now to the glittering pageantry—and it *was* glittering, I saw it—of the crowning ceremony. The Court of Ak-Sar-Ben (Do I have to tell you that this is Nebraska backwards?) consists of:

Their Majesties	Pages to the Queen (6)
Pages of the Portal (4)	Throne Pages (6)
H.M. Council (4)	Ceremonial Dignitaries (3)
Pages to the King (including ring-bearer) (6)	Board of Governors (11)
Princesses (19)	Countesses (12)
	Their Majesties' Hussars

and a remarkable office called Substitutes for Absentees (2). Now I mention this because I want to twit my American friends about their attitude to "sassiety," as Babbitt called it. Many of them regard Britain as a semi-comical, semi-dangerous last outpost of feudalism in which everybody bows and scrapes endlessly to privilege, titles and wealth. And although I have explained about maids and squatters and taxes and butchers and Sir Stafford Cripps, they still hang on to their opinions. Very well, I must point out that British newspapers do *not* contain whole book-length sections dealing with the doings and affairs of "the hundred families." In the United States almost every paper I hoist has this social register. So there!

I have always held the greatest possible respect for America as a land of opportunity. From books and films I have gathered the impression that a leaden spoon in your mouth at birth and chill penury during the first ten years of life are essential bases for ultimate distinction and prosperity in industry. And as everybody knows, it is the bare-foot newsboy who is destined to acquire the presidency

of the Slapp-Guterich Consolidated Newspapers Inc. What I didn't know was that you could get the newsboys themselves to believe all this. But the Omaha *World-Herald* has enlightened me:

CARRIERS

Can Now Earn Up To
\$8—\$12 per week

Not only can carriers make good money, they can also gain a sound selling and business experience, learn to meet people, make collections and keep business records—all of which is excellent basic training for the years ahead. During the past eighty years the Omaha *World-Herald* has given opportunities to countless numbers of boys, a practical business experience and self-assurance . . . (London papers please copy.)

I find that I have said very little about Omaha itself—the stockyards, the university, the Martin Bomber plant at Fort Crook, the Art Museum, the girls, the latitude and longitude. I am sorry. To be candid I was more impressed and interested in Babbitt and in a veteran's house I had the good fortune to inspect. Although it was very late the veteran insisted that I should see his love-nest. He swung the car (old and battered) into a half-finished drive and rushed to warn his wife of our approach. She was in bed and the baby asleep: but it made no difference—I *had* to see it.



Convention

It was a bungalow made of wood on a basement foundation of very large bricks. The roof sloped steeply and was covered with red tiles. The basement was as roomy as the ground floor and contained a double garage, a work-room, storage space and the central heating system. Upstairs, the living-rooms were large, light and gay with good polished oak floors. I saw only a few of the innumerable labour-saving gadgets and they all worked. This house, with a stretch of garden all round it, cost the veteran about £2,000, which would not be much more than £1,200, I think, converted to the British price level. However, the veteran left me in no doubt that he was a very, very lucky person to get it.

Of course, the baby started crying as soon as I rattled my coffee-cup, and had to be nursed. Only then did ex-G.I. Joe let me go. Hod.



"I'm afraid Arsenal's let us down again, my lady."

The Pedagogue Remonstrates with His Red Ink Pen.

ENOUGH, my pen! must page on page for ever
Be gashed with your long rubric of dispraise?
Is this the guerdon of all young endeavour—
The snarl, the searing phrase?

Not thus your compeer at the term's conclusion
To parent eyes presents the naked fact;
His sabler streams confess a rich infusion
Of something known as tact.

Once fame avowed me equable and mellow,
Nor swift to mark if aught was done amiss;
My worst reproof was "Try again, dear fellow,"
Or "Just reflect on this."

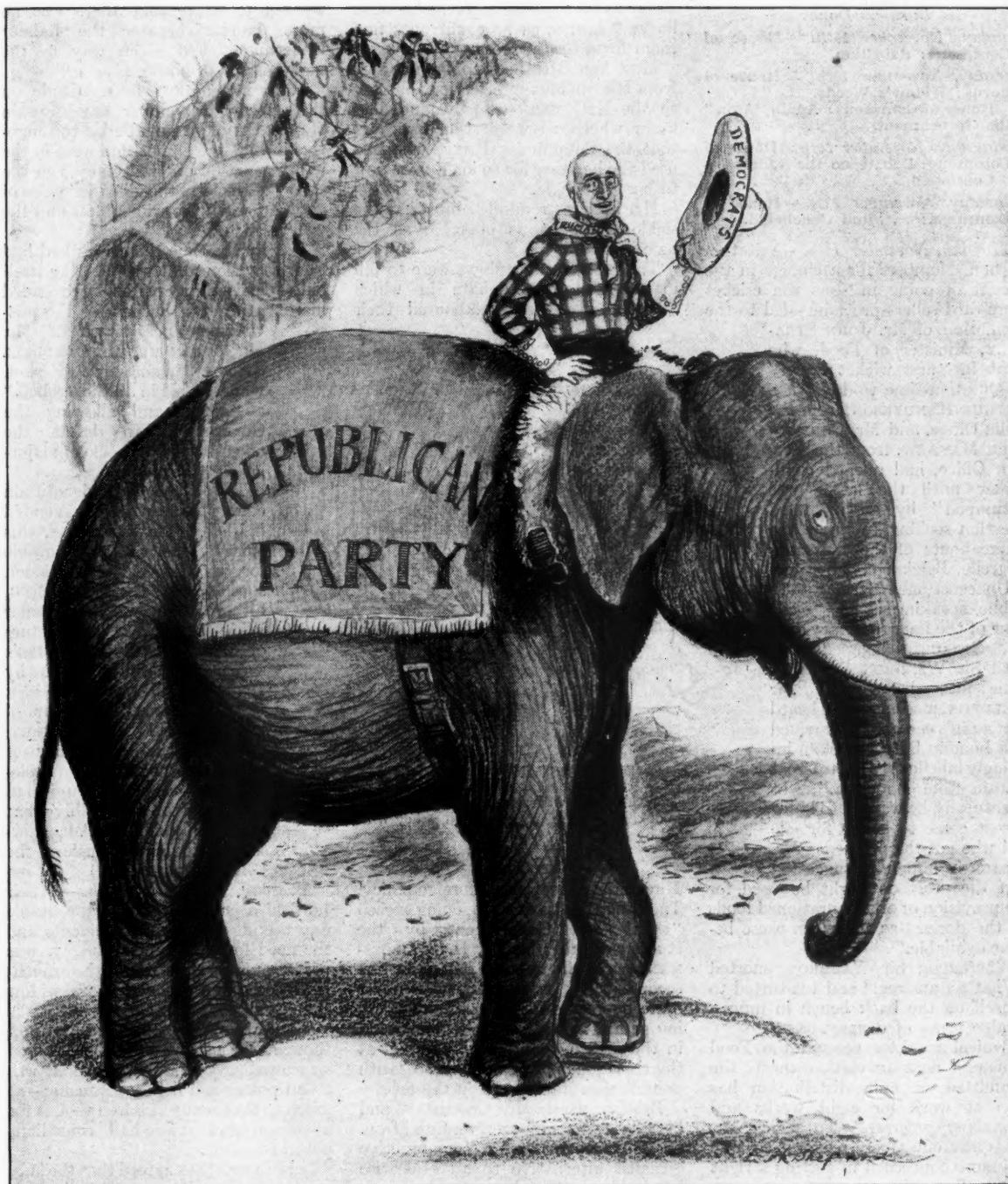
When now my name is breathed in dorm or study
An added title is conjointly heard:
It has six letters and it rhymes with "ruddy";
We rarely use the word.

'Twas you, my pen, that (like the squid) injected
Your scarlet virus deep into my soul;
'Tis your putrescent rancours have infected
• A nature once so whole.

Enough of it! henceforth my nobler plan it is
In gentle paths to plant my steps again;
If I would pose as priest of the humanities
I too must show humane.

Then shall they cry "How utterly disarming
This beak we fabled humourless and stern!
If erudition makes a man so charming,
Why, brothers! let us learn!"

Come then . . . Ah, Dawson, what a wild optative!
No, Turnbull minor, look at Section 10.
My poor Trevelyan, that is *not* a dative . . .
Oh, be yourself, my pen! M. H. L.



THANKSGIVING DAY

"Well, I've been on worse elephants."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, November 18th. — House of Commons: Rebellion.

Tuesday, November 19th. — House of Lords: Widow's Weeds.

House of Commons: Again "Agin" the Government.

Wednesday, November 20th. — House of Commons: Debate on the Address — Continued . . .

Thursday, November 21st. — House of Commons: . . . and Concluded.

Monday, November 18th. — Agitation by hon. Members for a change in the "order of going in"—as the cricket score-card sellers proclaim—led to the promotion of Mr. JOHN STRACHEY, Minister of Food, who went in "first wicket down" at Question-time to-day. Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON, from the India Office, and Mr. CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW, from the Foreign Office, had opened confidently until the latter was "stumped" by an awkward question seeking to know the whereabouts of the notorious Degrelle, Belgian collaborator.

Unaccustomed as he was to public speaking at this early hour of the Parliamentary day, Mr. STRACHEY shaped well until Sir WALDRON SMITHERS came into the attack. Sir WALDRON, it seemed, had heard that a pig's carcase had arrived at a London butcher's shop invitingly labelled: "Gift to Great Britain from Rhodesia." Not unnaturally he wanted to know how it came to be up for sale and who got the proceeds. Mr. STRACHEY hopefully suggested that the proceeds might be used for the provision of other unrationed foods by the donor "as and when these became available."

Whereupon Sir WALDRON snorted "What an answer!" and tut-tutted to himself on the back bench in unmistakable tones of dismay.

Cynical laughter greeted the Food Minister's next revelation that "the committee on milk distribution has been at work for eight weeks and is making progress." To which Mr. STRACHEY effectively retorted that he was more concerned in getting a right answer from the committee at some time than any answer at a particular time.

By way of distraction Mr. PIRATIN conjured up a picture of happy Communist holidaymakers harvesting amid the cornfields of Leicestershire while

their children played serenely in a nearby crèche. Mr. TOM WILLIAMS, Minister of Agriculture, refused to go so far as to organize a crèche at other harvest camps, as he could only find room for active workers.

Most hon. Members nobly refrained from the obvious interjection, but not so Mr. MCGOVERN who demanded to know whether the question indicated that the Communist Party, who had used the hammer for so long, were now to use the sickle.

Mr. PIRATIN reminded him that the sickle could be as effective as the hammer.

The real hammer blows were to fall in the following debate in which Socialist dissidents belaboured their

from the Opposition benches cried: "They do not dance to-day," thereby giving Mr. CROSSMAN the point he wanted to make that there was no more dancing because the Labour Government had given way to the views of the Opposition.

With meteorological exactitude on this stormy November day Captain HARRY CROOKSHANK alluded to Lucretius in that the Opposition were in the happy position of "watching from the safety of the land the great struggles of another, when the winds blow and the waters rage."

But by the time the critics had had their say the storm was blowing itself out. Everything might have ended in comparative calm but for the mischievous persistence of Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. CAMPBELL STEPHEN in forcing a division, which ended in all the "rebels" abstaining and allowing the Government to defeat the amendment by a clear majority of 353 to nil.

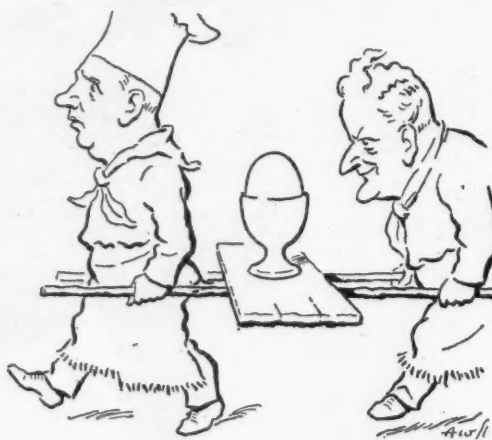
The subsequent debate on conscription which again ended in defeat for the critics, this time by 320 to 53, was notable for a long-delayed maiden speech by Mr. GEOFFREY BING, hitherto "gagged" as a junior Whip, and for a word-picture of Mr. CLEMENT DAVIES's speeches skilfully drawn by Mr. OLIVER STANLEY.

"The natural rotundity of phrase," said Mr. STANLEY, "the habitual profundity of tone, the occasional irrelevancy of theme, all unite to remind me irresistibly but pleasurably of Sandy Macpherson playing dance music on the B.B.C. organ."

Tuesday, November 19th. — Their Lordships spent a not unprofitable day talking about road accidents and the need for their prevention. It was perhaps inevitable that the much-maligned poster of the mournful widow should attract attention.

The Duke of RICHMOND AND GORDON thought the picture in fact portrayed an exceedingly bilious woman. It was a bad poster and highly confusing—so much so that many children took it for a parson and music-hall comedians poked fun at it.

Lord LLEWELLIN agreed that the lady was meant to be a desolate-looking person, and admitted that he was horrified when he first saw the poster. But as few people had not said how much they disliked it, it meant that it had achieved something by attracting attention to a particular problem.



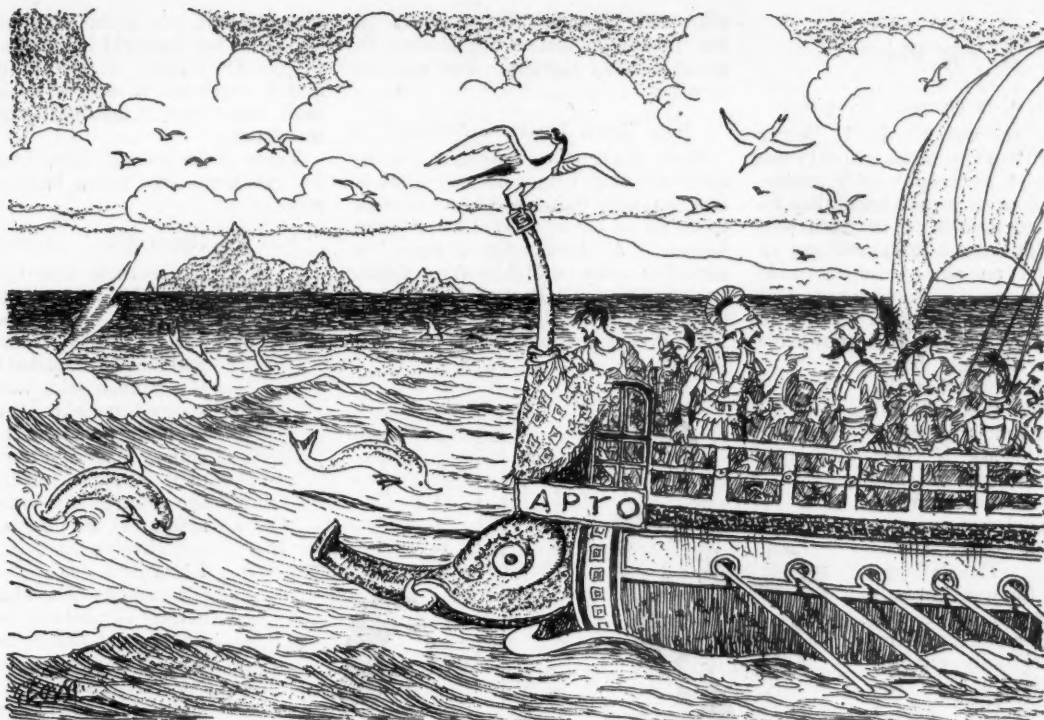
PIÈCE DE RÉSISTANCE: A DUCK'S EGG

(Mr. McGovern and Mr. Stephen were tellers for the movers of the amendment on foreign policy which was defeated by 353—0.)

Ministerial colleagues on foreign policy. The effectiveness of the opening speech "agin" the Government by the studious-looking Mr. R. H. S. CROSSMAN was spoilt to some extent by the seconder, Mr. J. REEVES, who never quite overcame his unfortunate opening gambit, which deposited mankind in the melting pot, while standing at the cross-roads of war and peace, with annihilation staring him in the face!

Briefly, what Mr. CROSSMAN and his fifty-seven supporters wanted from the Government was a "constructive Socialist alternative to an otherwise inevitable conflict between American Capitalism and Soviet Communism."

He recalled the day when the people of Greece, Spain, France and other nations "danced in the streets" when the Labour Government came into power. Incautiously, Professor SAVORY



"And suppose we do come back with the Golden Fleece—how in Hades are we going to get it through the Customs?"

The humble, oft-knocked-down pedestrian did not come out of the debate too well. It was time, thought the Duke of RICHMOND, that a little more responsibility should be put on his shoulders. While walking or until he boarded a vehicle he had virtually no obligations. He could do whatever he liked. He need not look where he was going or keep on a particular side of the road. He need not illuminate himself at night, nor indeed was he bound to keep sober.

Even where railings were erected to keep him out of danger he was perfectly free, if he wished, to hop over them into the front of a vehicle travelling along the road. Such freedom would not help to solve the road problem.

In the Commons Sir WALDRON SMITHERS, denied the knowledge of how much floor-space was to be occupied by the Ministry of National Insurance, suggested that whatever it was the bureaucrats who occupied it were unproductive—drones in the hive, who would destroy, not create, jobs.

Mr. JAMES GRIFFITHS, Ministerial Master of the Hive, courteously hoped that at least his Ministry would produce a retiring pension for the hon. Member very shortly.

The day was largely occupied with a heated debate on the complex closed-shop issue, and another on the failure of the Government to act quickly on the Curtis Report on the care of children—ably opened by Mr. WILSON HARRIS and ultimately supported by seventy-nine hon. Members.

Wednesday, November 20th.—Homing pigeons sent out by Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. HAROLD MACMILLAN returned to the Westminster loft to-day.

Mr. CHURCHILL's came back with a different coloured ring on its leg, for he was a Liberal in 1918 when he advocated the public control of transport and power.

Mr. MACMILLAN's had carried a message to the world in 1935 suggesting that electricity was a case for early socialization and that so far as the railways were concerned socialization would present few difficulties and few advantages. But the time was fast approaching when the whole transport system would need co-ordinating.

It was Mr. HERBERT MORRISON who pulled these pigeons from the party pigeon-holes to the embarrassment of the Opposition, for whom Mr. MACMILLAN had moved an amendment to the Address complaining that the

Government proposed further measures of nationalization which must confuse and retard the recovery of the nation.

Apart from a "stand-up" strike by Mr. MORRISON and Mr. CHURCHILL, each of whom stood glaring at the other refusing to give way until the Deputy-Speaker called them to order, the debate proceeded more or less smoothly with honours even at the end.

Thursday, November 21st.—Hon. Members, oppressed by the weight of their post-bags from sailors, soldiers, and airmen, urged the Government on more than one occasion to-day to short-circuit the work of their secretaries by issuing a statement or allowing a debate on the slow-down in the rate of demobilization. Mr. ATTLEE promised to see what could be done by way of explanation without offering any hope that the rate would be speeded up.

Mr. E. SHINWELL, Minister of Fuel and Power, demonstrated that he had little of either commodity to offer when he announced that petrol rationing must remain in force, and that he could not even allow the Christmas shop windows to be illuminated.

The debate on the Address was concluded.

At the Play

"THE DAY OF GLORY" (EMBASSY)

DURING the war Mr. H. E. BATES got closer than any other writer to the very special philosophy of aircrews. Without flourish or sentimentality he managed to tune in to the men who were working out a grim new way of life behind an almost impenetrable façade of comic moustaches and fantastic under-statement. Here, in his first play, he uses this knowledge against a domestic background to show what the fear was like that followed the first glamour of fighting and to ask if there shall be no end to such sacrifice. I must confess I found it much more moving than some other critics have done. The dialogue discovers the quick revealing phrase of which Mr. BATES is a master, and the piece is skilfully put together, though both the second and third acts I thought went on too long.

On the eve of a big operation we see a famous fighter pilot rejecting the fiancée who cannot grasp how he has changed and turning for comfort to a girl who understands. He would like to talk naturally with his mother, but to nobody but *Julia*, old beyond her years, can he explain what he feels about the terror he saw in the face of a German he has just shot down. In the offing is an uncle who lost part of his reason at Passchendaele. Next morning the pilot is killed. It is a conventional enough story, but *Jack's* tight-drawn suffering, *Julia's* compassion and the crazy old man's horror that his own private hell has not been worth while add up to something more positive than a mere commentary on the mess of war. And Mr. BATES leaves the door open for hope. The casting is accurate and Mr. BASIL DEAN's production polished, though occasionally there is a need to speak up. Miss MARY MORRIS gives the performance of the evening as *Julia*, Mr. RODERICK LOVELL as *Jack* sympathetically suggests the strains below the surface, Miss GWYNNE WHITBY plays the *Mother* with excellent judgment, and into his sketch of a Polish

pilot Mr. GERARD HEINZ packs all the laughing, tortured gallantry of those doughty fighters. The rest are sound.

MISS RUTH DRAPER (APOLLO)

MISS DRAPER's repertoire is so extensive that I dare not say what is new, but only that I was lucky enough to hit off six pieces which I hadn't seen before. "A Class in Greek Poise" is merciless satire on Middle West uplift. In "A Children's Party" the mother of a tough quartet copes tactfully with every possible crisis but one.



COLLECTING THE EMPTY

Col. Sanderson, D.S.O. Mr. RAYMOND HUNTLEY
Julia Miss MARY MORRIS

"Three Breakfasts" is the story of a marriage from silly bliss through middle doldrums to the comfortable moorings of deafness and rheumatism. "Glasses" is a brilliant bit of social observation based on our general inability to master the devil in our spectacles. More serious in tone is "Three Generations in the Court of Domestic Relations," showing a New York slum-girl pleading to a judge against her mother and grandmother for permission to marry and get away; and "In County Kerry" is the simple relation by an old Irishwoman of how her son died at Suvla and afterwards appeared to her. It is sentimental but effective. Finally we had "Vive la

France," the one about the peasant seeing off her husband in a little boat to join De Gaulle. It is magnificent and I could see it once a week and each time find something more to marvel at.

There is only one Miss DRAPER. Let us hope she comes back to us soon.

"AND NO BIRDS SING" (ALDWYCH)

As a hinge for their comedy Miss JENNY LAIRD and Mr. JOHN FERNALD employ the ancient controversy of career or marriage, which I thought had long been settled by all the women who seem to succeed in making the best of both worlds. It is a clumsy hinge and too much of it is visible, but though the argument is stale the manner of the play is fresh and lively; and if Miss ELIZABETH ALLAN fails to persuade us quite that the heroine's problem exists we can at least believe that the presence of so attractive a doctor possessed of such dazzling resources of wardrobe and cellar must be social dynamite in any London slum. What it all boils down to is whether Dr. Elizabeth will continue to sublimate her mother-instinct in teaching the young of the tenements to think for themselves, estranging her ecclesiastical landlords in the process, or go down fighting before the breezy charms of George, late R.N.V.R., a man of guile and patience? Seeing that he is played by Mr. HAROLD WARRENDER with irresistible lightheartedness we planked our money on

George, and it was a safe bet. There are neat incidental situations and some excellent minor sketches of character, in particular by Mr. NIGEL STOCK, a rugged son of Glasgow, Miss HELEN HAYE, a vinegared puritan, Miss NATALIE JORDAN, the doctor's chief guinea-pig, and Mr. RUSSELL WATERS, a winning Jeeves from the lower deck. I should say the acting is rather better than the play, but that the combined operation will undoubtedly please the town, which will not inquire too deeply whether landlords who end a tenancy on the grounds of free-thinking would not quickly find themselves at the deep end of a law court. ERIC.

At the Ballet

THE collaboration of FREDERICK ASHTON, Lord BERNERS and CECIL BEATON might be expected to produce something sparkling in the way of ballet, but their new production at Covent Garden, *Les Sirènes*, has surpassed all expectations. It is a burlesque of high life on the Riviera in the palmy days of 1904, when the world seemed a safe and delightful place, and the rich still got their money's worth. The setting represents a fashionable *plage*, with an arcade inspired by Monsieur EIFFEL in surroundings of Casino-baroque. The plot is of the slightest and the real interest centres in Mr. BEATON's dresses and hats and their component frills, flowers and furbelows and matching parasols—all guaranteed to make an austerity-clad audience feel like Cinderella's poor relations. The colours are truly ravishing, like a bouquet of rare orchids.

Into the gilded throng comes a dancer, *La Bolero* (MARGOT FONTEYN), driving up with a flourish in a motor-car of 1904 vintage. Hardly has the excitement of her arrival subsided when gorgeously-dressed orientals appear to prepare the way for a potentate (FREDERICK ASHTON) far too wealthy and exalted to use a mere motor-car. He descends slowly and impressively in a balloon, and presents the fascinating *La Bolero* with an enormous diamond necklace as a token of admiration and in the hope of favours to come. However, even the glitter of diamonds cannot, in the lady's estimation, outshine the well-greased charms of the operatic tenor (ROBERT HELPMANN) who catches her eye; and when this tenor pours out his heart in the way tenors do, and then pours it out again without waiting for an encore as they also do, she finds him quite irresistible, though she continues to wear the diamonds.

By this time the tide has come in, and the crowd of fashionables appear in all manner of gorgeous bathing toilettes, with skirts, frills, stockings and fantastic headgear, to disport themselves in the green cardboard waves that rock invitingly to and fro. The more daring spirits take to a sailing-boat, but the rest perform prodigies of natation in a sea obviously costing a thousand francs a gallon.

There is always a risk that the humour of a spectacle of this kind may be spoiled by the creak of too-complicated machinery. It is a dangerous experiment too for ROBERT HELPMANN

actually to sing in his rôle as the preposterous tenor. However, the joke certainly comes off, and *Les Sirènes* is a first-rate entertainment.

The Ballet Rambert too have a new and successful joke to their credit in *Concerto Burlesco*, with choreography by WALTER GORE and décor and costumes by EVE SWINSTEAD-SMITH. In comparison with the scale and lavishness of *Les Sirènes* it is but a thumbnail sketch, but it is witty and amusing within its modest limits. It is a burlesque piano recital, with four pianists all dressed alike in black cassock-like garments and transparent eye-shades. If, as we think, this is meant to suggest that any virtuoso pianist is exactly like any other virtuoso pianist, Madame RAMBERT will no doubt by now be receiving a flood of indignant correspondence. Some concert-goers too may recognize themselves among the "audience" of *Concerto Burlesco*, for it contains several well-known species of the genus—the hysterical, typified by SALLY GILMOUR in a watery-green Grecian dress and a wild red wig; the languid, who consider it "smart" to arrive late and display intense boredom; and the oblivious, who go to concerts

merely to hold hands. The music is by BARTOK, arranged by ARTHUR OLDHAM. *Concerto Burlesco*, taken all in all, is very good fun, and only lacks a still higher polish in performance to win a place among the Ballet Rambert's front-rank successes.

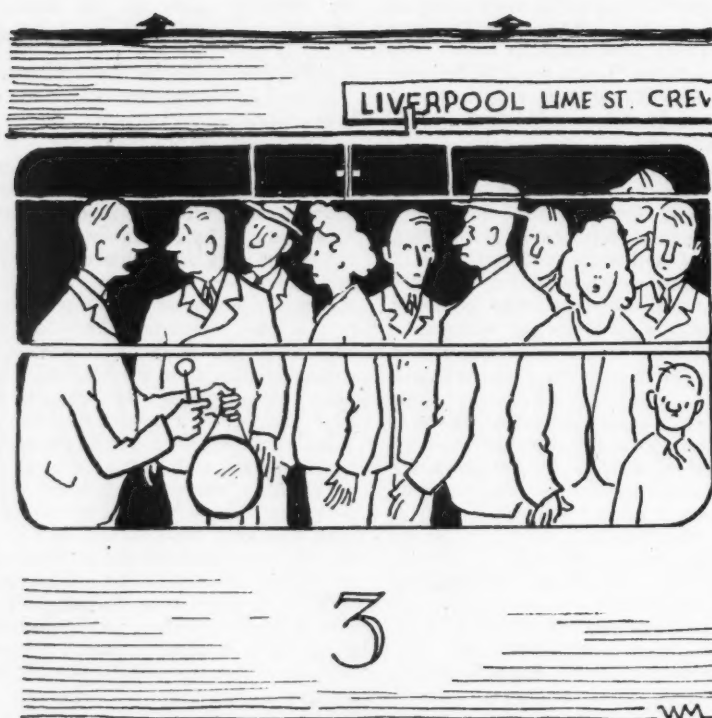
The Vagabonds is a novelty recently produced by Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet. It is a drama of jealousy among a quartet of vagabonds, with choreography by ANTHONY BURKE of the all-in agonized variety which is always rather tiresome. VIVIENNE KERNOT's mountain scenes are excellent in their romantic colour, but for vagabond girls to wear long flowing dresses is absurd. A few hours of good honest vagabondage of the apache type that these specimens go in for would soon reduce such frocks to knee-length tatters.

Of other recent productions, the revival of *Carnaval* at Covent Garden, with VIOLETTA PROKHOROVA as a very dainty and pretty *Columbine*, HAROLD TURNER as *Harlequin* and FREDERICK ASHTON as *Pierrot*, is charming. The new Covent Garden production of *Coppelia* is lacking in style, though MARGOT FONTEYN's *Swanhilda* is as brilliant as ever.

D. C. B.



"Hullo, shipmates!"



"Take your seats for first lunch. Pass it on and give the gong a bang."

Scene with Sliding Doors

WHEN the agents wrote and said I could at last have one of the garages I accepted delightedly. I should have been more delighted if I had not sold my peeling and water-logged car the week before, having become doubtful about the impartial handling of the waiting-list, but even now it would be nice for my motorist friends, who could visit me without having their wheels stolen during supper.

There are eight garages at Trinculo Court, or, more properly, one long garage with spaces for eight cars, each space having two sliding doors on a little railway. The right-hand door bears the garage number, and mine bears the number seven, which is a good enough number if you forget that Pythagoras regarded it as the climacteric number of all diseases.

When the first of the month came and I was entitled to do so I went and looked at it, rolling back my right-hand door. It looked all right after I had kicked some of the bottles

towards the back, and it smelt comfortably of warm oil.

It was about a week later that I persuaded Ribthorne to come to supper. I was lucky to get him, because he is a man in great demand, and when he spoke pettishly about not daring to bring his car I was glad to be able to mention my garage. "And," I said, "I don't mean a rubble-strewn oblong of wasteland two miles from the flats." "You mean it's got doors?" he said, impressed. "It's got doors," I said. "Give a toot outside the block and I'll come down with the key."

He was late, but then he can afford to be. The sound of his horn brought me from my bed; it was an expensive, fruity sound, in keeping with the huge and bulbous limousine that came rolling into the courtyard as I came out. I trundled back the door of number seven with an air. Ribthorne had brought his gleaming leviathan round, and the headlights swept the doors.

"What do you think this is," he

asked, shoving his nose out of the window—"an invalid-carriage?"

I saw that the door I had opened only presented a gap of about four feet, and with a shout of apology I went to throw back the other, the left-hand door. It stood its ground and threw me back. I went and looked at the other edge and saw that it was padlocked to the right-hand door of garage number six. I stood away, thinking. The thing was simple enough, no doubt, but for me it had the black horror of those Christmas titter derisively as I try to arrange three squares into a triangle. But I kept cool. If the right-hand number six door could be . . . No. Suppose the left-hand number eight . . .

"What seems to be the trouble?" called Ribthorne, a note of impatience sounding above the murmuring engine.

I told him, and he asked, logically enough (he *would*), how I had managed before. I said that it hadn't happened before. He got out of the car, shutting the door with a juicy clonk (none of your cheap metallic clicks for Ribthorne), and came to take command.

"Silly ass," he said, sizing up the situation in a flash. "That left-hand number eight door belongs to you, just as your left-hand number seven belongs to number six, and so on right down the line."

The easy way he put his shoulder to the left-hand number eight was deceptive; there must have been a good deal of weight behind it, otherwise the door (which didn't budge) couldn't have knocked his hat off like that. He picked it up and rubbed his shoulder with it before striding purposefully into the inner gloom. I heard him step on the bottle. I think he must have fallen head first, because the sound of his heels coming down on the bumper of the number eight car was a trifle later.

"I'm terribly sorry," I said, looking in. "I—"

"Come in here," he commanded.

His theory, he explained tersely, was that some of the doors were in the wrong order and on the wrong railway. If we could only— He unbolted the left-hand number six from the right-hand number five and began to roll both the number sixes along towards the two number eights, picking up my number seven on the way. After a foot or two this produced a solid barrier of doors, with the four-foot gap a little further to the left.

"I don't see—" I began.

"You don't have to," said Ribthorne, with that mastery of repartee peculiar

to managing directors. "Bring your number seven down here." He set about a few permutations with the doors immediately handy, and succeeded in moving the four-foot gap a little further to the right.

A shout from outside heralded the arrival of another car-owner. I went out and found a man trying to drive into number five.

"What's the idea?" he said.

"There's something funny about the doors," I said. "They—"

"It's as clear as daylight," said Ribthorne shortly. He appeared in the four-foot gap, now in front of half-garage number four. "Here, you"—this to the number five man—"come and help."

The man appeared to reflect before answering. Then he said moderately, "I'll come and unlock mine." However, when he put his key in the padlock it wouldn't turn. He looked up at the door. "What the blazes is number seven doing down here?" he demanded, and taking hold of its edge with both hands he sent a little train of doors rumbling off towards the right. When they immediately returned at double the speed he was surprised, and took his backward pace only just in time to avoid being crushed.

"What the devil are you playing at?" bawled Ribthorne, springing angrily into the headlights about four doors away. He was pale and dishevelled, and seemed to have a lot of oil down the front of his coat.

"What am I playing at?" The man sent the doors back with a crash that nearly cost Ribthorne a leg. "Why, you—!"

Ribthorne suddenly shot out of the space opposite which we were standing. He had plainly covered the short stretch of darkness at a run, and was dribbling a paint-tin in front of him, but I think this was just luck.

"You fool!" he said, panting. "I'm doing this on a system. You're just messing about and making a muck of it!"

"System or no system," said the man grindingly, "there's only one place for a number five door, and that's between number four and number six."

"Look—" I began.

"Shut up, you," said Ribthorne.

"And don't you call me a fool," said the man loudly. "You go and fetch my number five door back where it belongs."

"Who do you think I am?"

"I don't care who you are," said the man. "Get up there and fetch it."

"Get up and fetch it yourself,"

shouted Ribthorne, and furiously set about shunting the doors back one by one with a deafening din. As each door arrived the man kicked it back again. At one point Ribthorne's scarf became trapped between two doors travelling together, but he wrenched his neck out of the noose and left it trailing. As the pair of them worked they called each other names, and on the whole I thought Ribthorne had the feebler turn of invention; he may have become conscious of this, or perhaps he was getting tired. At any rate he suddenly stepped back, breathing hissing through his nose.

"For the last time," he began,

raising his chin in a dominating, board-meeting fashion, "I'm going to—"

Then the kitchen window of the flat above opened silently and a lady poured a basin of hot water on his head.

"Quiet, please," she said, and withdrew.

Just for a moment there was quiet. Ribthorne stood there with the steam from his hat weaving patterns of strange beauty in the light of the headlamps. Then I withdrew, too. There was nothing more I could do. I suppose self-importance is a disease of sorts, and if Ribthorne doesn't know his Pythagoras, is it my fault?

J. B. B.



"Well, I'm taking all the points I can get in case they take bread off the ration as a Christmas treat."

With the Horseless Carriages to Brighthelmstone

THE card of entries reads like a wine-list from the moon, distinguished by such stirring vignettes as Leon Bollée, 1896. The dawn



"There's a perfectly good door at the back."

is cold beside the Serpentine. Mr. P.'s artist, disguised as Amundsen in a huge naval duffle-coat, is signing on as supercargo in a Clement-Talbot of 1903. It greatly suggests an open-air drawing-room, upholstered in magnificent scarlet leather. My own mount is more reverend, a nineteenth-century Benz about sixteen hands high. It is simply a dogcart, from which the



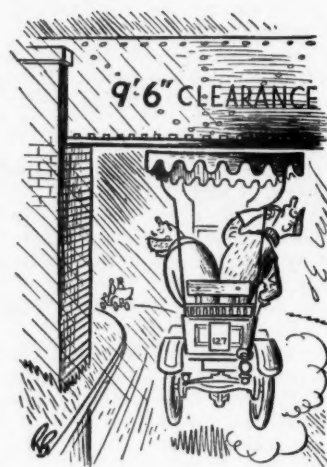
enterprising German doctor thoughtfully removed the shafts before inserting under the back seat a two-cylinder engine. This develops about three and a half Shetland-power. What we shall develop is another matter. To instil life all you have to do is pull the back of the cart to pieces, send a last

message of instruction to your executors, take a grip of a wicked-looking flywheel and swing until the ghost of Doctor Benz responds. Whether many people used to do this before dining at the Ritz I cannot say. . . .

The start is not easy, but the R.A.C. has the whole thing beautifully buttoned up. We sail out of the Park deafened by the plaudits of the mob. My host is now giving a remarkable imitation of an octopus. All his feet are called upon to do is agitate a ship's bell and make token approaches to the brake, but his hands are in very different case. One operates a small brass sundial which is said to have influence with the steering while the other seven or eight are busy with the gears, each of which has a lever to itself, and a colony of knobs all having a definite bearing on our getting to Brighton during 1946. It is an amazing performance, through which he remains cool, masterful and charmingly patient with my silly questions. There are one hundred and nineteen starting, he tells me. The outing is to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Emancipation Run of 1896, which marked the abolition of the yokel with the red flag. No car younger than 1904 can take part, and two of the original drivers are with us. . . .

South London goes by vociferously. The crowds have now had breakfast and are correspondingly swollen. In Brixton I descry an elderly man with all the signs of a hangover who is doing his best not to believe he has seen us. He stands on the pavement motionless, muttering brokenly, his eyes loosely-poached eggs filled with horror. I half expect an ugly rush of rioting ostlers and infuriated stage-coachmen bent upon lynching us, but nothing of the sort occurs. Far from it. In Streatham a baby is held high above the crowd so that it can better inform its grandchildren about us. . . .

A lot of countryside goes by gracefully at about 15 m.p.h. One of the many delights of the early motor-car is that you get a railway view and can see what is happening on the other side of the hedge. If anything is. Between us and the elements is a dashboard reaching all the way up from our feet to our ankles. I think you would have thought it rather cold. . . . At Crawley life is restored by an excellent lunch, and in conversation with members of the Veteran Car Club I realize that these enthusiasts have discovered in the horseless-carriage an entirely



new art-form. In the fullest sense they are collectors. If it hadn't chanced to be period Lanchesters and baroque De Dions it would certainly have been Chippendale and Ming. . . .

After lunch the rain, which had been merely caressing, changes its tone sharply. Now it comes at us with gale force flat from the South Pole. Almost before you could say Panhard and Levassor we are numbed to the differential. How my host keeps us road-borne I cannot imagine. I am sitting in a scale model of the Baltic, where my impermeable is breaking faith. Also I am sinking into a gentle coma, in which I dream we have shot the dogs and are sharing out the last scraping of pemmican, when there is a gentle twang like the farewell of old braces and one of our precious driving-belts lies dead on the road. To me it seems the end, but not to my gallant





comrades. Tools are jerked from where we used to keep the nosebag, legs protrude oilily in all directions, and we are joined by a friendly djinn in a black hat whose pockets are miraculously stuffed with workshop bric-à-brac of the period. Owing to the inclement weather he is a decidedly pink djinn. I am able to turn my attention to the curious procession which now passes us. Mr. P.'s A. will describe it far better for you, but it appears that whereas pioneer constructors began by thinking in

terms of the assisted curriple, about 1903 they resolved to get as far away from the horse as possible, a thing I have myself been trying to do all my life. The intermediate apparitions grinding bravely past range from a bathchair perched on the front of a tradesman's tricycle, to which a small engine has been married, to a fascinating steam monster, just like a third-class waiting-room, in which the royal laundry used to make its stately pilgrimage to Windsor. There are tiny one-seaters, vast touring wagons with

circus canopies, and many purely Emettic vehicles. Half a century spent in outhouses and junk-heaps has brought nothing more serious than a twinge of asthma on the hills. . . .

En voiture! Our faithful engine easily defeats the Downs, and there we are; with no fewer than seventy-four of the other starters. Brighton is so wet you cannot tell where it ends and the sea begins. We hit one another bluely on the back. After that we process traditionally along the front for the benefit of admiring sea-gulls, and then suddenly every hot tap in the town is turned on and we disappear blissfully in steam. ERIC.



Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Historical Essays

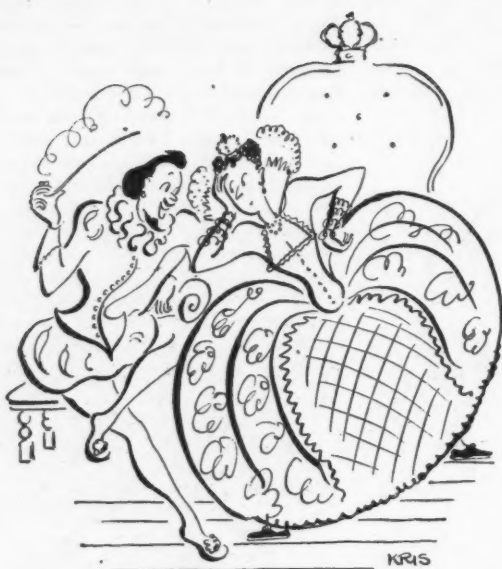
MANY of the essays in *Velvet Studies* (JONATHAN CAPE, 7/6) deal with the English Civil War, on which Miss C. V. WEDGWOOD, the very able historian of William the Silent, is at present preparing one of her longer works. Miss WEDGWOOD is particularly interesting on the military history of the Civil War which, being fought in a prosperous and orderly country, was conducted without the terrorization of the non-combatant population characteristic of the contemporary fighting in Germany. Another excellent essay deals with the Cavalier poets who flowered in what Miss WEDGWOOD calls "the false forward spring" of the sixteen-thirties, and suffered different kinds of blights in the following decade, dying in battle or by camp fever, or being imprisoned or driven into exile. The two chief painters of the age are delightfully sketched—Van Dyck, who after ten brilliant years as a fashionable painter died just before the outbreak of war, and William Dobson, whose stormier life closed "at about the same time as the Scots sold his most distinguished sitter to the English Parliament." The least satisfactory essay is "Aspects of Politics," in which Miss WEDGWOOD writes bitterly about "the smug condemnation of the political world," quoting Bacon's remark that "power to do good . . . cannot be without power and place." It was not the devotees of power and place who carried through the great practical achievements

she mentions—the abolition of the slave trade, the reform of prisons and of the factory system. There is a happy mean between Francis Bacon and Simeon Stylites.

H. K.

A Guide to the Forest of Arden

Which is the maddest Shakespearean criticism of all? The "psycho-analysis of *Hamlet*" which explains the sex symbolism of the gravediggers' scene? The "proof" that Shakespeare was not only Bacon, but a Rosierucian? Or Plumptre's essay which (back in 1796) perhaps started it all—the *Observations on Hamlet, Being an Attempt to Prove that he Designed it as an Indirect Censure on Mary Queen of Scots?* At the other end of the scale stood the honest and thoughtful criticism of the late JOHN PALMER. His was the practical man's approach—the practical working man of letters. He was a dramatic critic and a lifelong student of the French and English theatre, but he also collaborated, as the other half of "David Pilgrim," in a series of thrillers and rattling yarns. He came to Shakespeare as an appreciative member of the audience first, a scholar afterwards, and in the Preface to his "Political Characters" he claimed only "to say a word or two which may possibly come rather new to the reader." The companion volume, *Comic Characters of Shakespeare* (MACMILLAN, 8/6), was left unfinished when he died in 1944 and is published now as



"... and then there's Fifth Avenue."

five studies only—Berowne, Touchstone, Shylock, Bottom, Benedick and Beatrice. The book was planned to illustrate two theories: first, that Shakespeare was incapable of the coldly detached satiric genius, producing instead, with his boundless sympathy for living beings, "the essential humane comedy." Nobody would quarrel with this or find it new, but PALMER puts it finely when he says: "*When you tickle us, do we not bleed?*" This is a question which no comic character has a right to ask." The second theory is "in most of Shakespeare's comedies there is one central character in whom we find our point of reference for the humorous values of the play," and this perhaps would have been more convincing in the completed book. It is true that Shakespeare was fond in comedy and tragedy alike of introducing one figure who is not passion's slave, and whose blood and judgment are so well commingled that he acts almost as a chorus. Touchstone, as his name implies, is such a figure—but is Bottom? Are we meant to watch the dream through his eyes, or with the fairies? And can we really "refer the humorous values" of the Merchant to Shylock? All this JOHN PALMER might have made clear in time. Meanwhile the ordinary reader will be grateful for these essays which wear their learning so lightly, conjuring up not only the Elizabethan sources but the great players and the gaslit or candlelit theatre of the past. There are several errors of names and dates, but these the author himself would have been the first to correct.

P. M. F.

Athenian Pepys

Time was when any Englishman earmarked for active intervention in politics had a classical education. He was shown, very clearly, in miniature, what happens to city states that acquire empires and what sort of rulers, good and bad, they throw up. One of the many pleasures Mr. O. F. GRAZEBROOK obviously gets—and bestows—in *Nicanor of Athens* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 10/6) is a close-up of crude democracy, shrewd oligarchy and

brainless aristocracy, all typically at loggerheads in the Athens of Cleon and Socrates. The "unknown citizen" through whose exquisitely mellow cynicism we view this world, is a scion of that "piracy degenerating into merchanting" that also formed Elizabethan England. His father, although an admirer of Cleon, produced Aristophanes' *Knights*, the first play the boy saw; and the play is the core of the book—but what a book! As a trader's son, Nicanor explores the Islands; is initiated into the Mysteries at Ephesus; philanders and weds; serves in the fatal Spartan Wars, and comes home to a commissars' Athens in which Socrates and his nest of traitors are gratefully dead: gratefully, for "what have right and wrong got to do with Athens?" A shapely, limber style fits its engrossing theme like a glove. Buy the book at once—and keep it if you can.

H. P. E.

The English Road

The Road Goes On (THE EPWORTH PRESS, 15/-), compiled by Mr. C. W. SCOTT-GILES, is a literary and historical anthology which draws on all kinds of sources to present a vivid and detailed picture of British roads from Roman times to the motor age. In mediaeval times the roads were so much neglected that the Church encouraged the care of them as pious works, meriting indulgences. Queen Elizabeth, on a progress through Sussex, found "more dangerous rocks and valleys, and much worse ground than in the Peak." Evelyn, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was robbed and nearly murdered outside Bromley. Round about 1740 Lord Hervey complained that the road between Kensington and London was so bad that he might as well be living on a rock in the middle of the ocean. Forty years later Arthur Young found that the roads in Ireland were out of all comparison superior to those in England. Yet about this time, everything in this world being relative, a German traveller praised the English roads for their wonderful firmness and solidity. An immense change came at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with Telford and Macadam, who inaugurated the great coaching age of the two or three decades before the railway. There were mail-coach routes all over the country, with average speeds of twelve miles an hour; yet even in these improved conditions a journey by stage-coach, now so picturesque in retrospect, was, in Dickens's words, "dreaded as a very serious penance then."

H. K.

Stories of the Seamy Side

The Becker Wives (JOSEPH, 9/6) shows Miss MARY LAVIN at her cleverest. She is a far more accomplished short-story writer than she is a novelist—and here are four long short stories dealing, vivaciously enough, with a drab, almost sub-human, world. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the purely human *arête* is a difficult ridge on which to preserve your balance; and most of Miss LAVIN's people, making few efforts to surpass themselves, are very realistically degenerating. Her first tragic study shows the effect of introducing a child of fantasy into an aspiring lower-middle-class clan. "The Joy-Ride" portrays a highly characteristic Irish escapade and is the most coherent and least pretentious tale of the quartet. "A Happy Death" emphasizes—perhaps a thought too emphatically—the ruin wrought by a wife who has been at once too much and too little to her husband. The fourth tale, "Magenta," is a pathetic picture of feminine escapism, embodied in two provincial spinsters and a young girl. The first story is the most ambitious and least successful. It lends itself too lavishly to its creator's paramount

weakness—a trick of endowing her obviously less gifted characters with her own psychological insight. Read in reverse, beginning with "Magenta," the book should make the impression it well deserves.

H. P. E.

American Enigma

It is hard to understand how *Alexander Woolcott* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 12/6) had any friends, but those who were prepared to put up with bullying and fantastic touchiness discovered the warmth which lay under the unprepossessing crust of this remarkable creature—writer, actor and talker—warped, suggests his biographer, Mr. SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS, by the effects of a bad attack of mumps in youth. Certainly he had all the marks of a pathological case, swinging uncertainly between megalomania and an almost puritanical disinterestedness, between a ruthlessly commercial chase after cash and a rare strictness of literary conscience. Of his wit and tremendous gusto for life and letters there was never any doubt. As a dramatic critic his taste was variable, but he was honest, courageous and very often right. Most of his best work was about people. When this field was wearing thin he found in the radio a medium which perfectly suited his exuberance, and the microphone (at 3,500 dollars a talk) made him one of the most powerful men in America. He fell for the fat rewards of radio advertising, but when the war came he used his influence to attack Germany, back Britain and bring his countrymen to a better sense of the world's danger. He was a loyal American, a good international and an impossible person. In a sense he was a snob in that he loved celebrities and could be unforgivably cruel to those who bored him, going out of his way to build up a reputation for outrageous sallies; at the same time neither colour, race nor class meant anything to him where his interest was aroused. It was left for his patient biographer to find out after he had gone for how much thoughtful generosity he had been quietly responsible. This is a vastly entertaining book, but it suffers from too much information and is far too long.

E. O. D. K.

Lisping in Numbers

Poets, like other workers, must learn their trade by exercising it, so gaining a measure of that technical excellence which means little of itself but makes fullest expression possible to those who have something to say: inevitably each must produce, in the process, work of no creative importance, only of interest in tracing the individual artist's development. Dr. GEOFFREY KEYNES, editing *The Poetical Works of Rupert Brooke* (FABER, 8/6), has added about twenty-five poems to those printed in "The Collected Poems" edited by Sir Edward Marsh. Two or three of them are very attractive, though echoes of Swinburne and Housman are to be heard in them, and Brooke's longest poems, written for the Rugby School prize in 1904 and 1905, are something more than remarkable work for so young a writer; but, apart from these, the additional poems, in spite of lovely lines and hints of promise, will not do much to increase his reputation. Dr. KEYNES writes very generously in his Preface that there is no one "better able to interpret Brooke's mind than was his first editor"; presumably Sir Edward Marsh had these poems at his disposal but did not include them in the volume published with his Memoir, nor did they see the light by Brooke's choice. In war-time, since then breath becomes so obviously a ware that will not keep, young poets cannot always wait for the maturing of their powers, for this may be the last song they shall sing, but, luckily for

us, Brooke perfected his technique, and when the shadows of 1914 faced him his work could show its full development. Less than a dozen of his poems, perhaps, will be forever England, many are good: it does them no service to increase the number of the less valuable from among which the reader must discover them.

B. E. S.

Scrap-Book

It would be difficult to find a sadder, more human and, in places, funnier set of snatches from other people's lives than is gathered together in Mr. JAMES A. JONES's book, *Courts Day by Day* (SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, 12/6), and has been run as a feature in *The Evening News*. The author is a kind and humorous observer. He does not poke cheap fun at the courts' victims or sentimentalize or wonder on paper about whys and wherefores, but he has the gift of flashing phrase that makes a picture. We can see the Hyde Park orator with his "lined elastic face, like a very old piece of brown sponge," and Abraham so "very old and very frail and very poor with a mist of beard to blur the sharpness of his chin," and Nancy (charged with stealing a piece of cheese and a tin of pineapple from the house where she was employed as a servant) with "the face of a child confronted suddenly by horrors in the dark." As one reads of the people who did what they did because of cold or hunger or a twist of the mind or out of beastliness or bonhomie, one gives thanks for the London magistrates who regard most East-Enders with fatherly understanding and yet are never taken in. The book is divided into sections—"Home Notes" deal mostly with lawful or unlawful wedlock; "Characters" tell the tale of eccentrics, including Edward, who broke windows when he wanted to be locked up, and Alexander who enjoyed a jargon of his own and replied "Rattle-twitter" and "Yo-heave-ho" to most questions in court. Other sections are about foreigners and the young. It is an excellent collection, excellently told, and makes one feel guilty.

B. E. B.



"And as soon as I've learned to drive I'm altering it to 'Chauffeur-Driven Car Service'."

A Band for the Dance

(Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting held in the Village Hall on 10th October 1946 to make arrangements for a Dance to be held in January 1947.)

THE Secretary asked if any member of the Committee knew of a suitable dance-band.

Mr. Oldham replied that he were very fond of a bit of a dance like, he were. In the old days, before the war, of course, it were he were talking about. This last war of course he meant, not the other one like. He used to go to Servants Balls like, all over, he did, and rare old times they were too, weren't they, Mr. Crane? (Mr. Crane was understood to say "Ar.") Why, he remembered that time over at Middleham when Mr. Arble lived there

—him what died before the place was sold, he meant, and became a sanitarium or whatever it was called he did not know—well, as he was telling the meeting, he remembered that dance like it was yesterday.

The Secretary asked if Mr. Oldham could remember the name of the band.

Mr. Oldham replied that he were coming to that. As he were telling us he used to go to dances all over, see, and he remembered once he went to a dance at that place near Ictham and he remembered talking to the band-leader—they were having some beer

or something together like in between the dances, see—and the band-leader were telling him that his wife were very poorly. Well next time he saw him, two weeks later it were—no three, because she had been dead two weeks then he remembered this band-leader telling him. It was at a dance at the Hall right there in the village it were when Mr. Haddow lived there, the Committee would remember.

The Secretary intervened to ask if Mr. Oldham could remember the name of the band-leader.

Mr. Oldham replied that he did not think he rightly could. He was not even sure he'd even ever heard it, but he was just coming to the point of his remarks. As he was telling the Committee it were three weeks after the dance at Ictham he saw this here band-leader bloke again, whose name he did not know, at a dance at the Hall like, and he told him that his wife had died, poor woman, of pneumonia two weeks before and here was the funny part. She had asked to be buried in her wedding-dress. Of course she must have known she were agoing to die like to have asked for it, see, but that's what they did, buried her in her wedding-dress and all they did. All in white lace and them petticoats.

Mr. Bailey intervened to say that his wife had given her wedding-dress to young Jane Sanders, her what married that American chap last year—no two year ago now it must be because Joe weren't back then when she married him.

Mr. Bass said that he knew that dance-band chap—him what used to play at the Servants Balls at the Hall, Mr. Oldham meant.

Mr. Oldham replied "Ar, that's the one."

Mr. Payne said that if that was the chap they were talking about his name were Derry.

Mr. Blane said No it weren't it were Burny.

Mr. Eagle said it were Bury.

Mr. Swift said it were Bugle.

Mr. Crane said he remembered a dance once (the rest of his remarks were inaudible).

Mr. Blane said that were right Bugle it were.

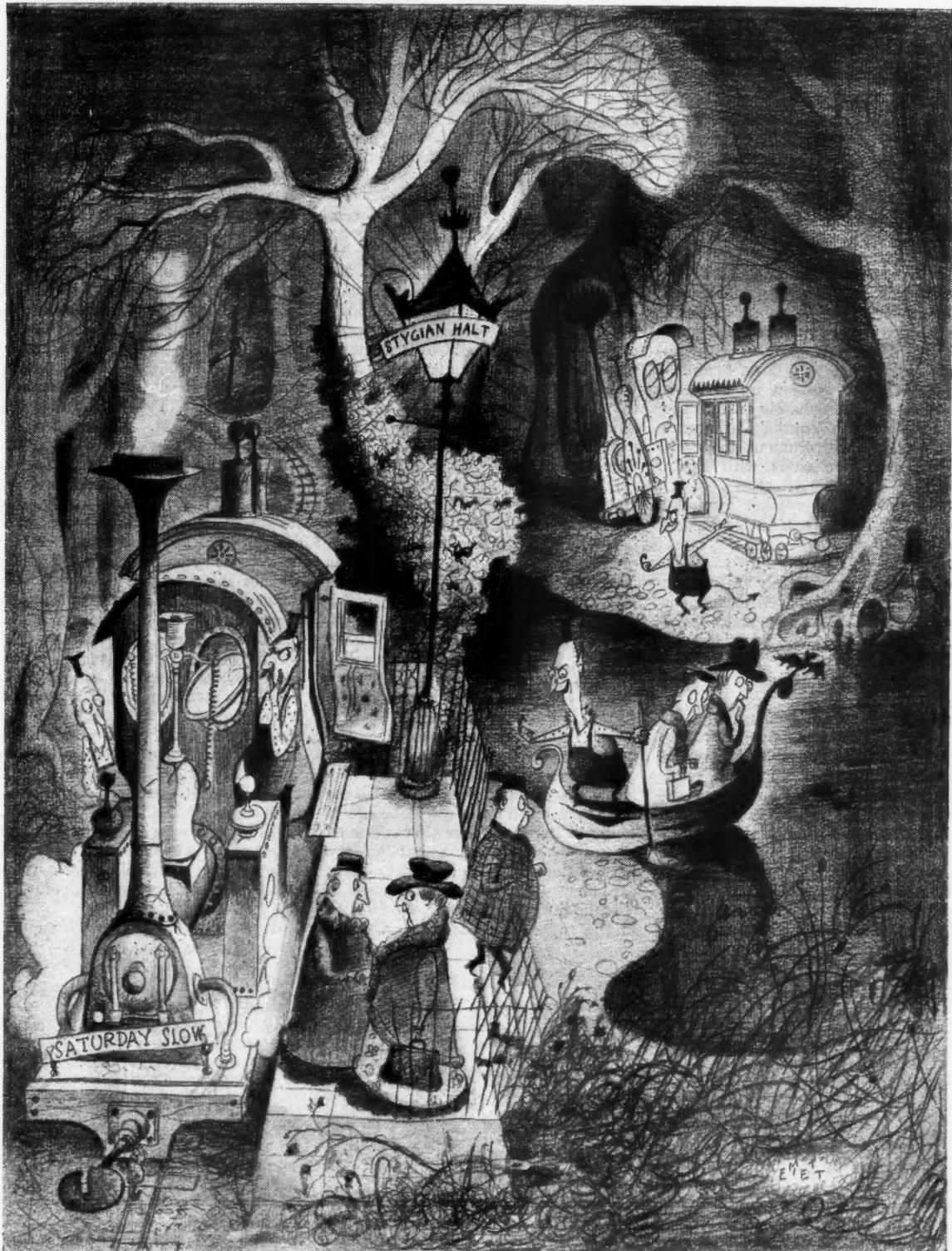
Messrs. Oldham, Payne, Eagle and Crane said Ar, that were right. It were Bugle.

Mr. Blane said that Bugle's Band were playing next week over at Cowmere for a dance at the Lion now he thought of it.

The Secretary said that he would talk to the landlord of the Lion and find out how much it would cost to have Bugle's Band for the Dance.



"If it comes to that—they didn't ask YOU to bring your knitting."



"I'm POSITIVE we didn't have to change the last time."

The Evening Institute's Progress

(Principal's Report to the Governors)

ONE hundred and twenty-six students have enrolled for Ball-room Dancing, one hundred and four for the Youths' Parliament, forty-two for typewriting, twenty-six for plastics, twelve for art. English, French, mathematics, geography, science and physical training have a combined total of ten enrolments.

The Youths' Parliament meets every week. The secretary has sent me a programme for the first six weeks and I reproduce it just as I have received it.

First Week. A speaker with an expert knowledge to talk on Spain.

Resolution to be sent up to H.M. Government immediately after the talk: "That this Youths' Parliament calls on H.M. Government to break off diplomatic relations with Spain forthwith."

Second Week. A speaker from the Board of Trade to speak on our exports and imports.

Resolution to be sent up to H.M. Government immediately after the talk: "That this Youths' Parliament calls on H.M. Government to cease exporting all goods needed at home."

Third Week. Speaker from the Ministry of Food to talk on food rationing.

Resolution to be sent up to H.M. Government immediately after the talk: "That this Youths' Parliament calls upon H.M. Government to cease food rationing at once."

Fourth Week. Speakers from the British, American, French and Russian zones of occupied Germany. Subject: "Germany To-day."

Resolution to be sent to H.M. Government immediately after the talks: "That a delegation of fifteen members

of this Youths' Parliament visit Germany at the expense of H.M. Government and report to H.M. Government on the future occupation and administration of Germany."

Fifth Week. Speaker from the United Nations Organization. Subject: "The Work of U.N.O."

Resolution to be sent up to H.M. Government, immediately after the talk: "That this Youths' Parliament, believing that international friendship can only be achieved through personal contacts, calls on H.M. Government to place facilities at the disposal of this Youths' Parliament for all its members to visit the countries of Europe on a mission of friendship, and that all expenses incurred be met from public funds."

Sixth Week. Speaker from the House of Lords. Subject: "The Authority of the Upper House."

Resolution to be sent up immediately after the talk: "That this Youths' Parliament demands the abolition of the House of Lords."

Very tactfully I have made certain suggestions, but, I regret to admit, without success. The Speaker has informed me that they may invite me to one of their sessions if I persuade the staff to build them a Strangers' Gallery.

The caretaker reports that the rooms are on the whole left in a less unsatisfactory state than was the case last year. The ink-wells are usable the next morning for the day school, but I do not know whether this is due to more considerate treatment on the part of the students or the scarcity of carbide.

Some difficulty is being experienced in the running of the canteen. The

arrangement which was agreed upon was that the teaching staff should serve out the refreshments and the students do the clearing up afterwards. In practice this means that the staff serve and clear up, as all the students seem to have a bus to catch. I have suggested that the classes should start earlier and finish earlier and so give the students time, or that I should approach the bus company with a view to persuading them to put on a later bus, but I am quickly and emphatically assured by them all that I have enough to do without going to all this trouble.

The enthusiasm of the students of the Beginners' Typewriting Class is rather perplexing. There are two classes, taught by two different instructors, but both instructors resigned after the first lesson. Two more were appointed, but, just as quickly, they resigned. I was able, after considerable difficulty, to persuade two friends of mine to carry on for just a few weeks, and for this I am very grateful. The students have asked me if they can carry on without teachers. The teachers tell me that the students certainly do not need their services. They say that they are inclined to be rebellious over finger-drill, tapping out a page of "io" "io" "io," etc. The students, in turn, argue that all they need is a machine, paper and rubber. They will bring their own apples and type all their own letters.

Of course, if we adopt their suggestion and dispense with the services of the teachers we shall effect a saving of public money. I would greatly appreciate your advice upon this point.

Yours faithfully,

M. JONES, Principal.



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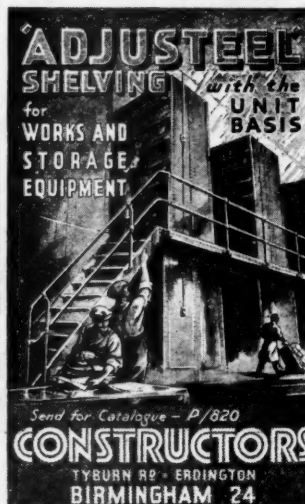
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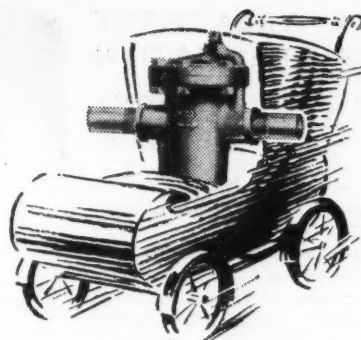
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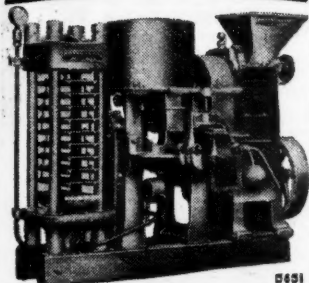
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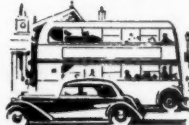
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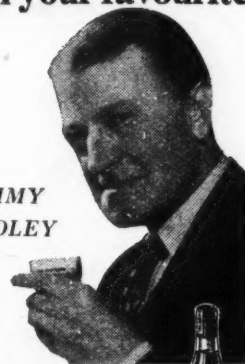


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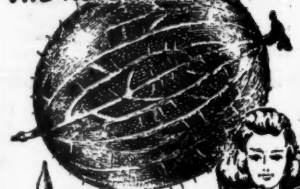
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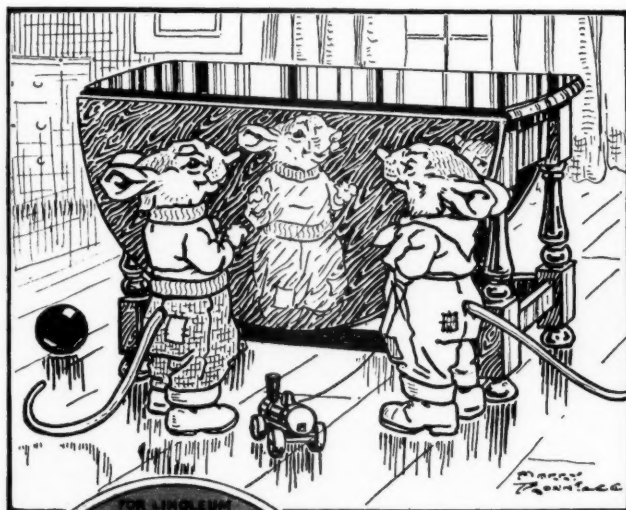
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